

The Child's
Portion:

Or the unseen

G L O R Y

Of the Children of God, Asserted, and
proved: Together with several other

S E R M O N S

Occasionally Preached, and now published.

By *Samuel Willard* Teacher of a Church in
Boston, New-England.

*Pfal. 42. 11. Why art thou cast down, O
my Soul? and why art thou disquieted with-
in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise
him, who is the health of my Countenance,
and my God.*

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Richard L Pearce Esq
of Edgartown, Mass
through
Hon James Savage Esq
of Boston

S E R M O N

Occasionally preached, and now published

By Samuel Richard Teacher of a Church
in New-England

THE FIRST PART OF THE
SERMON, AND THE
CONCLUDING PRAYER, FOR THE
SUNDAY, IN THE MONTH OF
JANUARY, 1853.

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Christian Reader.

THough it be a fault over common for men to pick a quarrel with the present times for being worse than those that went before, reprov'd by the Wise Man, Eccles. 7. 10. When men have more reason to fall out with themselves for making the times so bad; yet it is certain that the all wise Providence of an holy God brings many changes over the World, and his People in it. There are times when the Churches have rest, are edified, and multiplied: and there are times when iniquity abounds, and Persecution ariseth, and Gods People are scattered. What these times are into which we are now fallen is obvious to him that will not shut his eyes. It is the happiness of the true feavers of God, that he hath provided them consolations strong enough to hold up their heads above water when the waves rise highest,

To the Reader.

highest, and the raging billows make the greatest noise. When the Earth and all in it will afford us no comfort, then heaven can. And as it is our wisdom to be laying up treasures beyond Death and the Grave, out of the reach of time and change, so it is our interest to be strengthening our faith, and corroborating our hope by such things as all the malice of Men and Devils cannot pluck away from us. The time is coming when every mans foundation shall be tried, he only that is built upon the Rock shall then stand. To be able in an evil day to sit still with an undaunted courage and calm serenity upon our spirit, is a great felicity: The only way to do this is to be able to trust in the Lord, and with all grounded confidence to rely upon his Power, goodness, and fidelity: This is no common thing, but the priviledge only of a few, and those such whom God (having set his Love upon them in Christ) hath taken to be his possession, and listed in the number of his Children. To be of this number is to be happy indeed: To know our selves so, is a beam of light so full of refreshment, that nothing but heaven and glory can afford any more satisfying. Could we draw all the water out of this Well, it would make us

To the Reader.

to think our selves in Heaven before we come there. But the Well is deep, and our line too short, and bucket too shallow, whence they are but sips and small draughts we here obtain. Some of these you may possibly find in the ensuing discourse, And had my skill answered my desires, and the excellency of the Subject, they had been far larger and more refreshing: Yet I trust (God affording his blessing with them) they may not be altogether fruitless: And, may they but perswade, either strangers, to labour after son-ship, or Children to be more comforted and strengthened to all patience, by the consideration of their wonderful relation to the great God, I shall not have laboured in vain. Think not that I have hyperbolized in any particulars; no, the one half is not told you, nor can by the tongue of man here: and because I was not able to portray, I have but drawn a vail upon this glorious priviledge: think it to be infinitely more excellent than all that is said of it, and live accordingly. Of the following Sermons, I shall only say thus much: They were (through grace) profitable to some in the preaching, whose desire and hopes of their being further profitable, if Printed, gave occasion to the Publication of them;

To the Reader.

them; which that they may so be, and that the Author may be serviceable in his generation, to the glory of God, and good of Souls, your Prayers are earnestly requested to him from whom every good and perfect gift descends.

By your Servant

in and for Christ,

S. W.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

I JOHN III. II.

Béloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Not to seek far for the coherence of these Words, we may only take notice of thus much; that the Apostle having in the latter part of the foregoing Chapter, warned those he writes to of Antichrist; declared that there were many even at that time in the World, and given such a Character of them, as might serve easily to make them known: describing of them by their defection from the Doctrine of the Gospel, and particularly their denying of Christ: he from thence takes an occasion at *ver. 24.* to Exhort them to Constancy, in maintaining the Faith which they had received at their first embracing of the Christian Religion: unto which Exhortation

(further

(further to quicken and encourage them so to do) he adds divers Arguments by way of motive ; one of which is taken from the consideration of their Adoption, presented and pressed in the three first verses of this Chapter in the urging of which Argument, he,

1. Presents it to their consideration as an Argument and Demonstration of Gods inexpressible love to them, *ver. 1. Behold what manner of love* ; and such love requires great fidelity in those that partake in it.

2. Obviates an Objection which might be framed against it : *viz.* if we are such, and so beloved, how is it then that we are so contemned and trampled upon by the World, as those that are of no value, but a meer off-scouring ? he gives a satisfactory reason for this, because of the ignorance of the Men of the World, they know not God, and therefore they do not acknowledge his Children : if they knew him, they could not but see his Image in them ; but because they do not, therefore are they not competent Judges, nor are we to be discouraged though they reject and persecute us, *ver. 1.*

3. Asserts their Son-ship notwithstanding this Text : wherein he tacitly insinuates that if we would make a true judgement of our state, we must not then call in sense to umpire it, but conclude according to the Rules of Faith.

Hence,

4. Shews

4. Shews that the Sons of God are at present under a disguise, and look not like themselves, but withal hints that there is a time coming when they shall: Text.

5. Urgeth the hope of such a discovery or manifestation of the Sons of God as a sufficient Argument to press us to piety and purity, *ver. 3. Every man that hath this hope in him, &c. q. d.* this hope hath enough in it to settle us and keep us from shaking.

The words of the Text are a fixt Conclusion against all the misgiving Objections of Flesh and Blood, establishing the truth of our present state of Adoption, without any doubting or questioning of it.

The Emphasis of the assertion lies in the word [Now] and it looks either backward to the words foregoing, or forward to these that follow: it stands between two dark Clouds, and scatters them both. He had told them of this great dignity, and glorious title, but sense seemed to contradict, and say,

1. If we are Sons, why then are we not known? are not the Children of a Prince acknowledged by the Subjects? but the World tramples us into the dust, and persecutes us unto death, and would God suffer this, if he was our Father? well, saith he, they neither do know you nor him, and a Princes Son is of no repute with him that know him not from a Peasant, but

for all this you are Sons ; and your Father knows you, though the World doth not, and that may satisfie you : But,

2. If we were Sons we should be in a more happy condition, whether the World knew it or no : but we live in the midst of sorrows and sufferings both of body and mind ; we are encompassed and almost overwhelmed with miseries, and is this the portion of Sons ? do Kings wont to neglect their Children, and suffer them to live in misery ? well, but still this shakes not the conclusion : for, although the happiness we are entituled unto, appears not as yet, yet now we are Sons, and there shall a time come, when we shall be made to look like such.

We may first take the assertion it self into our consideration, *now are we the Sons of God*, and from hence we may observe this ;

Doct. The-poorest and most despised Believers in the World are now the Sons of God. The Apostle speaks of such as had received the anointing of the Spirit, *Cap. 2. 27.* of such as had known the Father and believed on Christ, *ver. 13, 14.* and these are they whom he pronounceth owners of this happy title.

In the opening of this *Doctrine* we are to consider : 1. What is meant by being the Sons of God ? 2. How we come to be his Sons ? 3. What is the profit or advantage coming to

tis by this relation ? 4. The evidence, or how it appears that we are such?

1. What is meant by being the Sons of God?

A. The Title of a Son is a title of Relation, and hath a Father for its correlate: God is pleased to assume this Relation to himself, and to acknowledge it between him and his Creatures, that so he may express his love and goodness to them, by such things as may carry, to their conception, the greatest evidence or demonstration; Father and Son among Men are relates standing very near one to another, and have such considerations and respects in them, as very nearly resemble that Covenant relation which there is between God and his People: Hence it is Analogically expressed: the same affections and engagements that Fathers bear to their Sons, the same doth God to his People; the same interest that Children have in their Fathers love and care, the same have Believers in God.

Now among Men persons come to bear the denomination of Sons in two wayes; viz. either by natural Generation, or voluntary Adoption. After the former of these wayes God hath but one Son, begotten by an eternal and undeclarable Generation: after the latter he hath many Sons, *even as many as believe in the Name of Christ*, Joh. 1. 12. So that by the Sons of God we are to understand all those of the Children of Men, who, by Gods free Adoption are made

to bear the relation, title and priviledges of his Children. It is a word borrowed from the customs among Men, who when they Adopt one to be their Heir, do give him the title of their Son, and although it differ from that in two main points, *viz.*

1. That God was not put upon it thus to Adopt any because of the deficiency or want of a natural Son, which is the main incentive to it among Men, that so they may have one to Heir their Estates : nor yet because his Son had given him any just provocation to reject and disinherit him, for which Men do sometimes abdicate their own Children, and adopt a Stranger : No, God had an only begotten Son, in whom he placed his delight from all Eternity, who had never given him any displeasure in the least, but had afforded him everlasting satisfaction; yea, then when his Father put him upon the highest proof of filial obedience, calling him to do and die for sinful man, he cheerfully replied, *Lo I come to do thy will Ob God :* Psal. 40. 7. this Adoption therefore was an effect of his abundant overflowing Grace, that it should be the good pleasure of his Holy Will to joyn poor Believers unto, and admit them to be made coheirs with Christ, *Rom. 8.17. Joynt Heirs with Christ.*

And,

2. That God doth not do it to make them inherit by way of succession, which is the case among

among men; and the ground and design of humane Adoption, being because man is mortal, and must in a short time die, and leave all his earthly possessions and name behind him; hence, that they may have one to bear up the their name, and possess their livings, which they can no longer in person enjoy, they substitute one in their room: so that as long as the Adopter lives, the adopted is kept out of possession, and must be content to wait for his portion, till the other goes off, and is often in the mean while put to many and hard shifts: whereas God lives for ever, and yet Believers are not entitled to, but have actual participation in all the good things of God, according to their present state and capacity, immediately after their Adoption, and eternally. Men say, when I die you shall inherit, but Christ saith, *because I live you shall live also.* I say, although in these things it differs (and evermore the antitype is something more glorious than the Type) yet in the main notions of Adoption they agree: *viz.*

1. As that, so this makes an absolutely free choice of the subject: if men do, much more God may take a liberty to do with his own what he pleaseth: the Adopted could have laid no claim to his Title if it had not been freely conferred upon him, he can give no other reason for it, but the good will of him who chose him unto it; if he had left him out, and named

another in his will, he could not have charged it as any wrong done unto him. Gods Adoption is an act of free Grace, and a discovery of his greatest love. Context *ver. 1.* *Behold what manner of love, &c.* it is said there to be a love given, or bestowed, and how free it is will appear.

1. From the antiquity of the Foundation of it: it was founded in Gods eternal Decree, where we were chosen to this priviledge, *Eph. 1. 5.* *Having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children in Jesus Christ, &c.* when the creature had no being, and consequently could have no deservying more then the other possible Beings, or his fellow-creatures, who were left out of this Register, then God resolved upon it, and writ it down in his Book of life, who they were that should be his Children and Heirs: then he took down their Names, and wrote them for the inheritance of Glory.

2. From the condition of those who are made partakers in this Grace, at such time as they are admitted unto it; Adoption came in upon effectual vocation; and when God comes to call sinners home to himself, he finds them strangers from God, and from the Covenant, *Eph. 2. 12.* *at that time ye were aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant of promise: they were also worthless creatures; they must all lay as the returning Prodigal*

Prodigal, *Luk. 15. 21. I am no more worthy to be called thy Son*, they have nothing in them to render them more amiable or desirable in the eyes of God, when God looks on them with an eye of Fatherly pity, he finds them rowling and wallowing in their own blood, *Ezek. 16. 5, When thou wast in thy Blood, I said unto thee live.*

2. From the meritorious and procuring cause of this Adoption, *viz.* the Redemption of Jesus Christ : for although Christ did not merit that God should purpose to Adopt us ; Gods Decree being absolutely and every way free, and the Redemption of Christ being a part, and not a meritorious cause of that Decree; yet Christ merited our actual Adoption for us : it is therefore reckoned among the fruits of his Redemption, *Gal. 4. 4, 5. God sent his Son to redeem, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*: had man had any desert of his own, yea had he not been laden with in desert, there had not needed the intervention of the great price paid for his ransom from the Law, before he could be actually made a Child.

4. From the way in which it comes, *viz.* by receiving Christ, and believing on him, *John 1. 12. As many as received him to them he gave power (or priviledge) to become the Sons of God, even to as many as believed on his Name.* Now Faith it self is a free gift, and every part of Salvation

vation that comes with it, *Eph. 2. 8, 9.* By Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God: yea the very ordaining and ordering of Gospel priviledges to be introduced by Faith, is on purpose for the declaration of Gods free Grace, *Rom. 4. 4, 5.*

2. As that, so this bestows the Relation and Title of a Child: he hath both the denomination and propriety of a Child in respect to the person adopting of him: see the words of *Jacob*, concerning *Manasseh* and *Ephraim*, *Gen. 48. 5.* as *Reuben* and *Simeon* they shall be mine: he bears the Adopters name, and hath from him such affections as if he wer^d his own Child: thus are Believers; the Name of God is called upon them, and they have the condition no longer of Enemies, nor yet of Servants, but of Children, *Gal. 4. 7.* Wherefore thou art no longer a Servant, but a Son.

3. As that, so this gives to him that is adopted the priviledges of a Son by natural Generation: what such an one may chalenge as his Birth-right, the same may this person chalenge by vertue of this choice: Believers have not a bare empty Title, but a Title which brings benefit along with it to him that receiveth it: they have all the priviledges, immunities, and advantages which belong to such a Relation, as far as they are capable, *Rom. 8. 17.* Joynt heirs with Christ, *Gal. 4. 7.* If a Son then an Heir of God through Christ,

Christ. What these are will follow afterwards.

2. *How we come to be his Sons.*

A. That we are his by Adoption we heard in the former : here therefore we are to consider of the way in which we are brought to partake in this Adoption : for although this (as every other Grace) is rooted in the Decree of God yet it is communicated to us in his special Providence, and particularly in the work of Application. Here therefore let us observe in general, that when God bestows the Grace of Adoption upon any, he doth, in order to it, and together with it, put the heart of a Son into him; which is more than Men can do for such as they chuse, who can do no more then express their kindness to them in external things, and in this respect, although, to express the difference between the Relation which *Christ*, and which Believers have unto God, it is represented under the notion of Adoption; for Believers are not, as *Christ* is, his Sons by eternal Generation; yet as to the way in which they are brought to a participation in this priviledge, it is resembled by natural Generation, whence they are not only said to be Adopted by, but also to be born of God, 1 *Joh. 5. 4.* *Whatsoever is born of God*, *John 1. 13.* *Which were born :* to be begotten, *Jam. 1. 18.* *Of his own Will he begat us :* and this is called Regeneration or the new-birth, *John 3. 3.* Except a Man be born again, which, how it is wrought

wrought, the Apostle briefly tells us, *Gal. 3. 26.* *Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus:* and we may take up a guess at it in these three particulars.

1. Our Son-ship is properly an act of our Communion or Fellowship with Christ: hence we are said to be *joynt Heirs with him*, *Rom. 8. 17.* and it must needs be so, for he was firstly appointed by his Father to be *Heir of all things*, *Heb. 1. 2.* Now, inasmuch as the whole Inheritance is his by his Fathers donation; hence if we do inherit, it must needs be in partnership with him: the Title of Sons and Heirs doth not pass from him to us, by way of alienation, it ceaseth not to be his by becoming ours, and therefore it must needs be in a way of our Communion with him.

2. Our union with Christ is the true and proper ground of our Communion with him in all his benefits: the Title can in no propriety of Speech be said to be both his and ours too; but as he and we are some way to be looked upon as one: and upon this account it is, that the Scripture also expresseth our Son-ship under the relation of our Marriage to Christ; so that by becoming his Spouse, in that way also we are made the Children of God; Hence that *Hos. 2. 19, 20.* *I will betroth thee to mee, &c.* and *2 Cor. 11. 2.* *I have espoused you to one Husband,* which Relation of Marriage, brings the party so related

lated into actual Communion in all that belongs to the Husband.

3. This Union is the fruit and effect of Regeneration : For,

1. Faith is the Bond of this Union on our part : it is that whereby we give up our selves to Christ, and to him alone, utterly renouncing our interest and trust in all other things : it is that whereby we cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, to be for him, and for no other : this is in the very nature of justifying Faith; and hence we shall find it frequently exprest in the Scripture under such phrases as these are, or others that are synonimical.

2. This Faith is the true and proper product of the Spirit in our Regeneration : that which is begotten and brought forth in us, is Faith : all that is before it in the Soul, is onlie preparatory unto it; all that is concomitant with it, is denominated from it; all Grace in us, is called Faith in Scripture, because that is the principal Grace wrought in us. Gods Elect are by nature dead, but the Spirit quickens them, *Eph. 2. beginning.* and how doth he so? why by causing them to believe : for the life of Regeneration is properly a life of Faith, *Gal. 2. 20. I live by the Faith of the Son of God*; so that when by the operation of the Spirit in him, a man is made to believe, he is then and not till then born of God, he is then also married to Christ; Christ marries with none

none that are dead; he finds them indeed spiritually dead when he comes to them; but he first quickens them by his Grace, causing them to believe, and so to live, and as such he takes them into this nearness of relation to himself, and so they are together and at once born of God, and espoused to Jesus Christ.

3. What is the profit and advantage coming by this Relation?

A. The Apostle *John* using it as a present Argument to engage us to constancy in times of Antichristian Tyranny, thereby intimates that it is a relation of infinite worth, and would have us therefore to consider of it, and take a large view of its worth and eminency; and indeed there is so much in it as we may lose ourselves in the contemplation: all the good which is wrapt up in the promise, is made over, and becomes the propriety of the Believer in and by his Son-ship; I cannot rehearse all, but the choice advantages of Adoption are such as these that follow.

1. The Name and Title it self is a great benefit and advantage: it is a dignity, an honour, to be called the Children of God: the Apostle seems to place much weight upon the denomination it self, *ver. 1. What manner of love, that we should be called the Sons of God? Jacob honoured Joseph's two eldest Sons, when he willed that his name should be called upon them, so doth*

doth the great God the Children of Men, when he is pleased that his Name should come into their Title; that those who were before by way of Disgrace called *Adam's Sons*, and Children of Hell, Children of Wrath, Children of the Devil, should rise, and be henceforth called the Children of God: this very Title declares these to be made noble by their new-birth, who by their natural birth were ignoble. It is among men accounted an high thing to be the Son of some King or Emperour, 1 *Sam.* 18. 23. *Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a Kings Son in Law?* what is it then for God to call us his Sons and Daughters, and to give us leave to call him our Father? as 2 *Cor.* 6. 18, *I will be to you a Father, and you shall be my Sons and Daughters saith the Lord God Almighty:* and *Jer.* 14. 9. *we are called by thy Name.*

2. They are taken into Gods Family, and that not as Servants but as Children, there to abide for ever, *Job.* 8. 35. *The Servant abideth not in the House for ever, but the Son abideth for ever.* Believers therefore are all one Household, called the *Household of Faith*, *Gal.* 6. 10. and they are of Gods Family after another manner then wicked Men and inferiour creatures: God after a more common way, and by a more general providence looks after the World and all the affairs of it; all creatures come under his care, and for that reason the whole Creation is his great Family;

mily : but these Children are under his special inspection and care, 1 Pet. 5. 7. *Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.* In sum, they being Children have him for a Father : And hence,

1. He will certainly provide for them, and they need not to puzzle their minds, or distract their thoughts about any such thing ; for he will consider all their wants, and send them relief ; they shall have whatsoever they stand in need of, and they shall have it as they need it, *Mat. 6. 31, 32. take no thought, &c. for the Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things :* if others in a Family suffer want, and be pincht with difficulties, yet the Children shall certainly be taken care for, as long as there is any thing to be had : they are hard times indeed when Children are denied that which is needful for them : Hence that *Psal. 34. 10. Young Lions are brought to want, and suffer hunger, but they that fear the Lord shall want for no good thing.*

2. He will protect them from all harms and injuries : and that both by defending of them from their Enemies, and also by righting of their wronged cause : and at all times, and in all cases whatsoever, they may with greatest safety, and without any fear leave it with him, and in it he will not leave him, *Heb. 13. 5, 6. He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will*

not fear. It is hard for earthly Parents to desert their Children, and when they see them wronged, to hold their peace, and neither say, nor do any thing to right them: it is certain God will not, nay he cannot, *Psal. 27. 10. When my Father and my Mother forsake me then the Lord will take me up. Jer. 2. 2. All that devour him shall offend, evil shall come upon them saith the Lord, Zech. 2. 8. He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.*

3. He will uphold them from falling: he will take them by their hand, and stay their steps for them, sustain them, keep them from undoing themselves; hence those promises, *1 Pet. 1. 5. Ye are kept by the power of God, Psal. 91. 11, 12. Gods Sons in this life are like little Children, alwayes tripping, and stumbling, and falling, and so weak that they could never get up again but for him: but by reason of his hand that is upon them, his everlasting Arm that is under them, hence if they fall at any time through incogitancy, or by stumbling at any thing that lies in their way, or through that weakness that attends them, or by Satans malice thrusting at them, he will lift them up again.*

4. He will counsel and direct them: they are tender and foolish in themselves, they have not wisdom enough of their own to order and direct their way; and are therefore easily seduced and cheated by the adversary, who is subtle, and watcheth

watcheth all advantages against : but he is al-
wayes giving them his Fatherly advice, warning
them of their danger, shewing them a way how
to escape it: they have the voice of his Spirit
behind them, telling them this is the way, *I sa.*
30.21. they have the guidance of his most wise
counsel to keep them in the right way unto glo-
ry, *Psal. 74.24.*

5. He will assist and strengthen them, he will
lend them an helping hand to carry them
through all their difficulties, temptations, straits
that they are engaged or involved in, in their
Christian course, and the discharge of their du-
ty in all of them, *2 Tim. 4.17.* *The Lord was with*
me, and strengthened me : they have a great work
to perform to serve God in their Genera-
tion, but his Grace standing by them, becomes
their sufficiency : a Fathers love draws forth his
helping hand, to assist his Son, and carry him
well through all that is before him.

6. He will Correct and Chasten them for their
Faults, *• Heb. 12. 6.* *He chasteneth every son whom*
He receiveth. They (like foolish Children)
may now reckon this for their damage; but it
is indeed none of the least of those benefits which
the Children of God do enjoy. God lets wic-
ked men alone to go on in their pernicious
wayes: They have their wills in the world, that
they may be destroyed for ever : But God here
afflicts his Children, that their souls may be sa-
ved

ved in the day of the Lord, 1 Cor. II. 32. *We are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World.*

7. He will commend and encourage them when they do well: see what an high commendation he gives *Abraham* for his love, and what a precious promise he gives him upon it, *Gen. 22. 16, 17.* the poorest services which they do, being done in sincerity to him, if it be but a cup of cold water given to one of his Disciples, in that Name, shall not lose its acceptance and reward: yea such is his Fathers respect, that he owns and crowns the very good will, and purposes, as much as if they really performed them: *David* doth but resolve to build an House to his Name and Glory, and God takes it kindly, and promiseth richly upon it, 2 *Sam. 7.* these things belong unto them as they are Children in the Family, and carry Consolation in the very mentioning of them.

3. They receive the spirit of Adoption, *Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 5, 6.* and here we are to observe, that the Spirit of Adoption doth not decipher any distinct spirit, but that it is one and the same spirit who doth illuminate, convince, humble, engraft the soul into Christ, &c. but it decipheres to us a distinct and peculiar observation of the Spirit of God in us: so that the dignity of this privilege is to be discovered in the effects which are consequent upon it, and they are such as these, viz.

1. The obſignation, or ſealing up of Believers to the certain and infallible enjoyment of their inheritance, *Eph. 1.13. & 4.30.* when God hath once admitted a poor Soul into the number of his Children, he now confirms and ratifies to him all the promiſes, and makes them unto him ſurer than the foundation of the World: yea, ſo ſure that neither outward Enemies, nor inward Evils ſhall ever be able to deprive them of this Title, *Rom. 8.39,39. I am perſwaded that neither height nor depth, &c. ſhall ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt.* It is poſſible that they may not alwayes with alike clearneſs diſcern it, ſome cloud or other interpoſing, but it is ever with an equal certainty therem, inasmuch as it is a gift of God, that is without Repentance.

2. The testimony which the ſpirit of God gives in to their ſtate of Adoption, witneſſing in them that God hath numbred them to his Children, and joyned them in the inheritance of all bleſſings with his own Son, *Rom. 8.16,17. The ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs, &c.* The effect conſequent upon this testimony is aſſurance, which aſſurance is in it ſelf a piece of inchoate Glorification, but the witneſs which the Spirit of God bears in us by vertue of which we are confirmed in this knowledge, is a priviledge of Adoption: and though Believers do not alwayes ſo diſtinctly hear him teſtifying, and to be able

to draw the comfort of it to their Souls, yet they have alwayes this witness in them, because the Spirit of God is ever with them.

3. The enlivening of their Faith, and thereby enabling of them to Go to God as a Father, and claim this Relation, and upon the claim believably to plead with him for the acceptance of their persons, the audience of their Prayers, the granting of their requests, and supplying of all their wants, *Rom. 8. 15. Ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father: yea the Spirit of God enables them thus to act Faith in consideration of this relation, not only in times of outward favour, when the candle of the Lord shineth upon their Tabernacle, and all things go well with them, but also in the most cloudy times of darkest dispensations, when God hides his face from them, and carries it towards them as if he were their Enemy: hence that challenge of Faith at such an hour, Isai. 63. 17. Doubtless thou art our Father.*

4. The powerful preservation of them in a state of Grace, *1 Pet. 1. 5. Who are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.* Believers are weak in themselves, and ly open to many strong temptations: and if they were left to themselves, those floods that assail them, would easily and quickly drown them: But the Spirit of God is still blowing upon this spark, and supplying of it with new fuel, whereby he makes

the faith of Believers to live and flourish, in despite of all those endeavours that are used to extinguish and ruin it.

5. His constant assistance in spiritual duties enabling them to perform them acceptably; and particularly in the great duty of Prayer to God, *Rom. 8. 26, 27. We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the spirit it self maketh intercession, &c.* they are weak to do duty, and carry about in them a masse of corruption, a body of Death, which presseth them down; evil is ever present when they would be doing of good, so that without him they can do nothing, and it would be a vain thing for them to set about any service to God in their own strength: but he stands by them, and is ready to put to his helping hand, supplying them with the influences of spiritual Grace, whence, when they are weak in themselves, they are strong in him.

6. To communicate to them the discoveries of the love of God, and thereby to fill them with spiritual rejoycing, *Rom. 5. 5. The Love of God is shed abroad into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us:* he applies the precious promises to their souls, he gives them cordials of comfort, communicates unto them the sips and fore-tasts of glory, fills them with inward joyes and refreshings: God by his spirit comes into the heart, and taking possession of it for himself, makes known his love there, which produ-
duceth

duceth joy unexpressible: this benefit is also a part of Glorification, it is something of Heaven, meeting us in our way; it is a bunch of those Grapes which grow in the celestial Canaan, brought us to tast of in the Wilderness: but the application of it is by the spirit of Adoption: and that is that which the Scripture calls the earnest of the inheritance.

4. They are made to partake in Christian liberty, *Joh. 8.36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, you are free indeed*, which liberty is not (as vain men would have it) a freedome to live as they list; a liberty discharging them from holy Obedience to the commanding power of the Law of God, and withal bidding them to trust in Christ for life and salvation, as Libertines plead: but it is an holy, spiritual Liberty; a Liberty from Bondage or Servitude, *Gal. 4. 7.*

viz.

1. From the servitude of the Law; not from the regulating power of it: for it still remains to be the directory of the People of God in their whole course, and hath the strongest tye to obedience that can be from the Gospel, *Joh. 14.15. If ye love me keep my Commandment*; nay, whatsoever flesh may plead to the contrary, it is certain that so to be losed from the Law, were not a priviledge but a misery: but it is a freedome from slavish subjection to the Law. *i. e.*

2. From the servitude of the Law, or condemning

demning power of it: from the thundring curses of it, *Gal. 3. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law.* The Law hath doomed all its offenders to eternal death, and by the sentence of it they are held under guilt: but Gods Adopted are set at liberty from this doom: it speaks nothing that needs to appall them; there is no spirit of bondage in it to them: they are not under the law as a Judge, but only as a Guid, a Light, and a Lamp.

2. From any dependance upon the Law for happiness in a way of works or doings, *Rom. 3. 28. We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.* This is a miserable bondage to fallen man, thus to depend upon the Law: Because it presents those that are under it every day with that which may assure them, that after all their labour and pains taken in legal obedience, they shall certainly lose all, and finally fall short of Blessedness: for, *by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. 3. 20.*

3. From servile Obedience to the Law: their service is now a service of love; for faith worketh by love: before this, he had the workings and stirrings of his Conscience, which by amazing terrors, and dismal frights, drave him to the performance of known duty, and restrained him from the commission of many erroneous sins; but all this was against his will, and glad
he

he would have been, might he but have enjoyed some relaxation; but now the case is altered: and he takes delight in the Law of God; and it is a great pleasure to him to be found exercising of himself therein, *Psal. 1. 2.*

2. From sin, *Rom. 6. 7.* For he that is dead is freed from sin: Hence that *1 John 3. 9.* Whatsoever is born of God doth not commit sin, not but that there are the remainders of active and stirring corruption to be found in the best of Gods Children as long as they bear about with them a body of Death; and hence *Paul's* so earnest complaints, *Rom. 7.* But,

1. Though sin be in him, yet it reigns not, *Rom. 6. 12.* Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body: it hath not the full compliance of the heart with it; but whenever it gains upon him, it is by leading of him captive, *Rom. 7. 23.* he is enthralled by it, and that appears because he is grieved at it, as one that is taken a Prisoner by his Enemy; and hence he sighs and groans for a delivery, *ver. 24.*

2. Though sin be yet God imputes it not, *2 Cor. 5. 29.* Not imputing their trespasses unto them: the sin of Gods Children being let upon the account of Jesus Christ, it is no longer charged upon them; for God having taken full satisfaction for it at his hands, and he having answered for it, we are righteous in his account.

3. Though sin be yet it shall never condemn them,

them, *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*: he complains of the presence and oppression of it, *Cap. 7.* but is here comforted against the condemning efficacy of it: he is freed from the dominion of that slavish Spirit, or Spirit of bondage, and needs not to go up and down in fear of suffering the eternal weight of Gods wrath.

3. From the World, *1 Job. 5. 4. Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World*: they are delivered and kept from being drawn away with those snares, baits, and temptations; and terrified with those threatnings which the World sets before them: hence they have such liberty of spirit granted them, that they can both trample in disdain upon the large proffers of the World to seduce them by from their profession; and undauntedly hold up their hands, against all the menaces that are made against them.

4. A liberty to serve God. For,
1. That opposition which was in their hearts against God is taken down, and they are brought under voluntary obedience to his Holy Will: their wills that were disordered, are set in their right place again, *1 Pet. 4. 1, 2.*

2. They love God and all his wayes, yea, they dearly love him, *Psal. 18. 1. their whole soul is now devoted to him and his service.*

3. They perform filial obedience to God, *1 Pet. 1. 14. As obedient Children*; they have not only

only the state and condition of Sons conferred upon them: but also the hearts of Children put into them: Hence Adoption comes in upon Conversion.

5. All the creatures of God, as it were, put under them, being used by him for their service; and that in three respects;

1. They have the service of the good things of God, 1 Cor. 3. 20. *All is yours*; they are made beneficial to them, they are their own: all that a Believer enjoys in this life he may truly call his own, as he is a child of God: the right using of the Creatures is again enlarged and restored unto them: wicked men indeed have an outward civil right, a providential right, but still they are liable to answer for all they have, and by their misusing of these things, and dishonouring of God by them, they encrease their condemnation, and lay up for themselves treasures of wrath, Rom. 2. 4, 5. but they have a spiritual right, and all their enjoyments are theirs by the new Covenant.

2. They have the Ministry of the blessed Angels, Heb. 1. 14. *Are they not all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*: Those glorious Beings which attend before the Throne of God, are also made to wait upon Gods Children, they guard these Heirs of Salvation; they are unto them tutelary Angels to defend them from evil, and to watch for

for their good, *Psal. 91. 11.* He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee : they pitch their tents round about them, *Psal. 34. 1.* they bring them messages of peace from Heaven, even answers of their Prayers, *Dan. 9. 23.* they strengthen and confirm them in their secret conflicts, *Luk. 22. 43.* and when they come to die, they are a convey to carry their Souls home to eternal rest, *Luk. 16. 22.* The Angels carried Lazarus into Abrahams bosom.

3. They have the cooperation of all things to do them good; *Rom. 8. 28.* Gods Children are called to pass through varieties of changes in this life, they meet with manifold afflictions, they have many enemies, men and devils that are engaged to plot their harm, and take all advantages to bring it about; but yet all these being over-ruled by the power and wisdom of God which stand on his peoples side, are made beneficial to them, and whatever they plot for evil, is turned to good; and (though sorely against their will, whom nothing more grieves then the welfare of the Saints) all helps them forward for heaven, and contributes to the encrease of their eternal glory : every reproach and injury doth but add weight to their Crown.

6. They are made Royal Heirs : they are conjoyned with Jesus Christ in the glorious inheritance that is prepared, *Rom. 8. 17.* Joynt Heirs with Christ : they are, as Children of the great King,

King, entituled to a Kingly estate: yea they are constituted Heirs of all things: God is theirs, Christ is theirs, the Throne and Crown that are prepared, and the exceeding eternal weight of Glory are theirs: and though for the present, during their nonage and minority here in this life, they seem but little different from servants to the observation of others, their Inheritance being as yet in reversion, and they mean while under manifold exercises of their graces, yet ere long, when they are made perfect men in Christ, and (having finished the work set them to do in this World) shall be brought to take full possession of their own, it shall then be known what happy ones they are.

4. For the evidence of the Doctrine, or wherein it appears that they are now the Sons of God, notwithstanding their present despicable condition: here take only two Conclusions.

1. There is nothing in their present mean and despicable estate, but what is well enough consistent with their Sonship: though they are hated, despised, persecuted, afflicted, and every way as low and mean as is to be imagined: For,

1. That the World hates them is rather an evidence of their Sonship, than any Argument against it; as being an exercise, and discovery of that enmity which God hath put between the seed of the Serpent & of the Woman. The Devil, who is the Father of ungodly Men, is Gods great

great Enemy, and the ringleader of Rebellion against him ; and no wonder, since he cannot touch God in his Being, if Hell rise up against him, and oppose him in his Children : It is true that wicked men do not know them to be certainly the Children of God, *for the world know us not*, ver. 1. but they know them to be other kind of men from themselves, and for this reason they hate and persecute them : our Saviour foretold his Disciples, that they must expect to meet this measure from the World, and gives the reason, *Mat. 10, 22. Ye shall be hated of all men for my Name sake* : it is for the profession which they make, and the glory of God which they are bound for, that they are hated and scorned in the World.

2. That God suffers the World to afflict and persecute them, denies not his fatherly care of them ; for in this very thing he makes men and devils to serve them : there is no Saint that ever was, or ever shall be a loser by all that Gods and his Enemies shall do against him : and that because what they intend for harm, God evermore, by a powerful over-ruling providence, turns for their good : his Graces are hereby tried, and made to shine forth, and that trial proves to be much better than that of God, *1 Pet. 1. 7.* God hereby puts an advantage into his hands to glorifie him, and testifying his love and sincerity to him, in cheerfully suffering all things

things for his Name : and Faith at such a time, teacheth him to rejoyce that he may be counted worthy for this, so did the Apostles when scourged before the Council, *Act. 5. 41.* and when wicked men have done their worst to the Children of God, they do but prepare for them a glorious Chariot to ride home in triumph to the City of God.

3. That they are low and mean in the world is not because God loves wicked men better than he loves them, whom he suffers to flourish, and abound in all delights, to live at ease and die without bands; but because such a condition in this life is usually best for them : and still when they are most distressed, poor, and bare, they are his chosen, they are rich, because God himself is their portion, and a Kingdom is prepared for them, *Jam. 2. 6.* as long as they are here they are from home; they are Strangers and Pilgrims, and it is safest for them to be so; and still that remains to be a great truth, *Psal. 37. 16.* *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked :* better because it is his own; and he hath it with Gods favour and love.

4. That God is often angry with them, afflicts them, and withdraws the light of his countenance from them, and puts them to grief, is not because he loves them not, but because it is that which their present condition requires: they are

are but Children, and childish, and foolish, and if they were not sometimes chastened, they would grow wanton, and careless of Duty: a Fathers love is evidenced as well in correcting a wanton child, as in providing for him: God doth it to shew his love, *Heb. 12. 5. Whom he loves he corrects*: he doth it for the saving of their Souls, *1 Cor. 11. 32. Ye are judged of the Lord, that ye may not be condemned with the World*: when the time comes, that all their sin is done away, then they shall sorrow no more: so that in all this way, how dark soever it seems to be, God is guiding them by counsel, that he may bring them to glory.

2. In this mean and despised estate of theirs, God is pleased to be giving of them many testimonies and clear evidences of their Sonship. As,

1. Their fellowship with Christ in his sufferings: this was one thing that *Paul* desired to know, *Phil. 3. 10.* and this the Children of God do know, inasmuch as they suffer for his Name sake, and in his cause, and that the Name of God may be glorified in their sufferings; and also because he supplies them with patience and constancy therein, for that they do not dishonour him, and hereby they come to know that blessedness is theirs, *Mat. 5. 12. Rejoyce and be glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you* they

They are made to understand that being joyned with Christ in his sufferings, they shall not be separated from him in Glory, *2 Tim. 2. 12.* *If we suffer with him we shall also reign with him.* Paul counts the Saints suffering, a manifest token as of the amazing destruction of their persecutors, so also of their future felicity in another world, *2 Thes. 1. 5, 6.*

2. The fruits of the spirit in them, working in all the graces thereof in their souls, and giving them their free exercise: Their love to God, their faith in Christ, their hope of Glory, their hatred of sin, their delighting of themselves in holiness, &c. The Apostle tells us the fruits of the spirit are manifest, and what they are, *Gal. 5, 22, 23.* The glory of Gods Children is inward and spiritual, and by the maintenance and increase of this, is a Child of God to apprehend a Fathers love: growing grace is a good confirmation of approaching glory.

3. The testimony of the spirit of God, added to and confirming of the testimony of their own spirits in witnessing to their Sonship, *Rom. 8. 16.* By vertue of which testimony, at such times as God enables them to read it, they can Triumph in the hopes of glory, trample upon all the scoffs and scorns and persecutions, and despise all the flatteries, and fair promises of the world: He gives them inward consolation, and enables them to call God Father in greatest
D straits;

straits, and strengthen them to roll themselves upon him, to commit their wayes to him, to cast all their burdens on him, and to wait with holy confidence and boasting for the manifestation of the Sons of God, and in expectation of receiving an immortal and eternal Crown, then, at the hands of the righteous Judge, they love his appearing.

1. Are Believers now Gods Children? It may then teach us what a dangerous thing it is for any to go about to do them any injury or wrong. The ignorant world seeing the Saints of God so low and despicable, to have so few friends here below to take part with them, and to be so poor and disregarded among men; they are hereupon ready to think they may do their pleasure against them, there is no danger is like to arise upon it, but they abide secure, though they slander, revile, persecute, and do them all manner of imaginable wrong: They have none to take in with them, none to plead their Cause for them, none to stand up in their defence: And being thus animated, with what boldness, virulency and spite do they prosecute them? But they grievously mistake themselves, and shall, in Gods time, find that they have so done to their cost. God will not suffer his own dear Children to be abused, and see that abuse to go free, and escape unpunished: Whosoever they be, though armed with the greatest worldly power, yet they had

had better take a Bear by the tooth, a Lyon by the Paw, than meddle with the least, meanest, obscurest and most seeming contemptible Saint of Christ, to do him any the least injury. If an earthly Father see his Child abused or misused by a stranger, how will his fatherly affection stir, his bowels boile, and put him upon it to vindicate that wrong? How much more will God do so for his Children, who are to him as the apple of his eye, and to whose mercys the bowels of most affectionate Parents are not to be compared? God may possibly seem to wink and keep silence for the present, and men may take encouragement therefrom to vent their spite and malice, but he will not do so alwayes, but a time shall come, and that quickly, when he will call them to an account for all, and a dreadful account it will be when it comes: God doth many times in this world testifie to his displeasure upon this very account, and there are several remarkable instances in Scripture of his severity upon the malicious adversaries of his Saints, enough to put a dread upon any such, would they but consider of it. Do *Korah* and his accomplices arise up against *Moses* and *Aaron*? They shall not dy as other men, but a new work shall be done, the earth with her opened mouth shall swallow them up quick, and they shall go down alive into the pit. Doth *Babylon* triumph in cruelty over the People of God, when it is used

as a Rod in Gods hand, to manifest his displeasure against them in punishing of their sin? Babylon shall smart for it, *Isa. 47. 6. &c. I was wroth with my People, I gave them into thy hand, thou didst shew them no mercy.* Neither shall Edom be forgotten, who in *Jerusalems* day of visitation, cryed, *Raze it, raze it to the ground, Psal. 137. 7.* How are Edom, and Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, and the *Philistians* and *Tyrus* threatened upon this account? See, *Ezek. chap. 25. and 26.* But supposing that they should escape here, (and God doth not alwayes presently let fall his hand upon the Persecutours of his People) yet is the time a coming, when the Persecutors of the Saints shall be made to know that they persecuted Christ, and shall find how hard a thing it is for them to kick against the pricks: when God shall render tribulation to the troublers of his Children, *2 Thes. 1. 6.* Their blood may for a season seem to ly still and speak nothing, but now are their souls under the altar, and are there crying to their God and father for revenge, and he who is holy and true will not alwayes hold his peace.

Tremble then at the thoughts of such a thing: that poor persecuted despised Saint, whom you seem to trample under the feet of pride, hath a Redeemer that is mighty, a Father in Heaven that will plead his cause. Make the Children of God your friends, and they will be ready to
 speak

speak a good word to their Father for you, and
 (however you may judge of them contemptu-
 ously, yet) there is a blessing in their prayers :
 But if you make them your enemies, wo to you,
 you had better bring all the world about your
 ears : The cries of Saints, when they are under
 the exercise of the envy and hatred of men,
 coming up into the ears of God and Christ, for
 the wrongs which are done unto them, are affe-
 cting cries and will stir up the holy jealousy of
 the great God, and he that is under the maledicti-
 on of them (scorn he it as much as he wil) it were
 good for that man if he had never been born.

U S E, II. This truth may afford potent argu-
 ment to encourage unbelievers to seek after
 Faith, and to believe in Jesus Christ : What do
 you think of it, who have been often invited in
 the Gospel to embrace him ? Will not this pre-
 sent him before you as one worth the entertain-
 ing ? Receive him by a true Faith, and he will
 make you, not only Friends, but Children unto
 God : And, for the further urging of this argu-
 ment, think seriously of these two motives :

1. Consider what you are at present, to whom
 God makes this proffer, that you may be the
 Sons and Daughters of the living God : what
 are we all, but a company of poor objects, base
 born creatures, lying upon the dung-hill, objects
 of contempt, ignominy and disgrace ? Remem-
 ber your original, your father the *Admirer*, your
 mother

mother the *Hittite*, *Ezek.* 16. begin. Then,

I. Hast thou no shame in thee? Art thou not abashed at thy vile beggarly, disgraced condition? Can you look to your father's house, the extract of fallen man, without blushing, or think of it without confusion? But now come hither, and here you may have all this shame covered, and removed, by being taken in to this honourable relation to God himself.

II. Have you no ambition? How do men account of, and with what aspiring desires do they reach after a claim of kin to great and eminent personages? If some earthly Prince should make such a proffer among his Subjects, yea, the best of them, as the great God doth now among poor and vile men; what welcome, what embraces would it find among them all? How eagerly do you grasp after the worlds honours? How pleasing are high titles to the Children of men? But lo! here is a title, against which if all the honours and gloryes which the world owns were set, they would weigh no more than the light dust in the ballance, and yet how cold and remiss are men in pursuing after it?

2. Consider how excellent a priviledge, how desireable a benefit this is. Believe it to be indeed an advantage; yea, ponder upon it, and see if it be not really so: enquire then, and say whither there be any thing that can come within the reach of your desires, that is not to be found included in it: For, 1. Would

1. Would you be honourable; and this is a thing which the world sets an high price on, eagerly seeks after and courts: But what greater honour can we conceive of, then now to be owned and declared the Children of God? Are the Children of earthly Princes accounted noble, and all respect shown to them? How honourable then are the Children of the great King, whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and to whom all the Kings and Potentates in the world are Vassals? How excellent must they be that can claim the nearest relation to the Sovereign of the whole world? that are able to call the everlasting Jehovah Father? this is an honour indeed, and he that hath it, may, with *Moses* trample on the highest glories of the world, and look upon them all with an eye of contempt. This honour have all his Saints.

2. Would you have Riches? and these the grasping desires of the sons of men are greatly carried after; this is the only way to come by them, *Rom. 8. 17. If Sons, then Heirs, heirs of God, and joynt heirs with Christ.* And can a man be such an heir, and be poor? The things which this world calleth riches, are poor things, if compared with those which believers are made to possess: And if they count such men rich, who enjoy a small part of this earth (which is it self but a spot) and a few of the perishing things of this lower world, is not he then rich indeed, who

truly, and without vanity, call the whole world his own? what then shall we say of him who hath the wealth and treasures of two worlds to make use of, and a uerer failing tide to them both? such you may be by Faith, *1 Tim. 4. 8. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* You are now poor and in straits, plotting and toyling to vanquish this poverty of yours, turning every stone, and trying all conclusions, and all to little purpose; but there is no plot like unto this, it is a design that cannot miscarry; get Faith and you are owners of more than heart can wish.

3: Would you have a free use of the Creature? and this well thought of might be a prevailing motive: Consider but upon what account unregenerate sinners stand in reference to all the good things of God which they do make use of, turning of them by their ill improvement of them, into so many treasures of wrath and vengeance, *Rom. 2. 5.* So much as they do enjoy of God's goodness, so many witnesses there are against them, to accuse and condemn them before him: Every meals meat, every draught of drink, every garment which they wear, all the contentment that they enjoy in this life, will add to, and make their torments so much the greater in hell. With what trembling doth the awakened sinner eat and drink, and make use of all the comforts of life? and thus because he now is made to un-

derstand

derstand that in all he doth but encrease his guilt, and render his account more fearful. But so, here is the way to be delivered from the tyranny of these tormenting thoughts, and to be able truly to rejoyce in the goodness of God: Get Christ to be yours by faith, and then these will be no longer stollen comforts ending in bitterness, but you may be able to rejoyce in the Lord and in his goodness, having all coming to you as new Covenant mercyes, sanctified by the blood of Christ.

4. Would you enjoy Divine Protection? this I am sure you stand in need of, whose precious lives then are so many that seek to deprive you of who ly open every moment to so many oppressing evils. Consider the world we live in, the awful dangers that are before us, and daily passing over our heads, the danger that we are continually obnoxious unto; the poor helpless state of man in himself: now to be left to your own care and keeping, to be turned out into the midst of so many evils alone, is a sad thing: But believe in Christ, and now are you the Sons of God, and then you are secure: They that harm you must first strike through his Omnipotence. Consider, *Psal. 91.* throughout, and what have you to say to all these things? Can you still strengthen your selves in unbelief? are you still unwilling to come to Christ, or do you begin to say, *Happy they whom the King of Glory shall*

shall admit to this honour? Will Satan, will the World; yea, can they invest you with such a dignity? Is it not better to be a Child of God than a Child of the Devils? Do not then reject this so fairly proffered privilege.

USE. III. For Exhortation to believers: As this great Truth affords you encouragement and comfort, to think that though the World despise and reject you, yet God owns you; though they count you abject and base, as the very scourging of the earth, yet that he looks upon you as his Children, having adopted you as his own, and put his Name upon you; so it may teach you these Lessons.

I. Love God with a filial affection: He deserves your best love, who hath shewen you such love as this is: *Context, vers. 1. Behold!* It calls for attention, observation, and admiration: *What manner of love?* It is a love which your hearts cannot comprehend, it is so great, so strange, that ever sinners should be taken so near to the great God: Let your love meet it:

Hence.

I. Love his Honour and Glory: Nothing can grieve a Child more than to see his Parents vilified, and hear them evil spoken of, and their names traduced: How then should it grieve the Children of God, to see and hear what woful dishonour is cast upon his glorious Name. by the profane lives and speeches of wicked men?

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this was *David's* overwhelming grief, *Pfal. 119. 136. Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy Law.*

2. Love fellowship or communion with him : Love to draw near him in all those wayes in which he reveales himself, and holds correspondence with his own People ; Take delight in Ordinances and spiritual Duties ; value one day in the house of God better than a thousand elsewhere ; be willing to go through all difficulties, and (if called to it) endure calamities that you may enjoy the presence of God : Get to be able sincerely to make *David's* profession, *Pfal. 119. 136. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine House, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*

3. Love his Image wheresoever you see it : We look often and with great content upon the Pictures of those on whom our hearts are set : There are those here in the World that are more than Pictures ; the Saints are living Images of the Lord, we may see in them, not only the likeness to, but the shining reflection of his communicated perfections : Hence we should love the Saints, as they are Gods Children, and our fellow brethren, so did *David, Psal. 16. 2. The Saints, in whom is all my delight.*

5. Love his commands : The dutiful Child loves that his father should be calling for his service, and is glad at the heart when any thing that he doth can find acceptance and give con-

rent.

tant: How doth *David* love the law? He cannot express it, *Psal.* 110. 96. How sweet and precious is it to him? *Psal.* 19. 9, 10. Do not reckon it to be your burden, but your priviledge, that your heavenly Father will honour you so much (who needs it not) as to imploy you about any thing for him: And though it be the meanest service, yet because it is for him, account it honourable: true love will stoop low to express it self to the beloved.

2. Serve God with a filial subjection; Its the Apostles counsel, *1 Pet.* 1. 14. *As obedient Children, &c.* There is a great difference between the service of a Child, and that of a servant: Shew your selves the Children of God.

1. By hearkening unto him in whatsoever he hath to say unto you: How diligent should Children be to listen whither their Parents call them or no? And what attention ought they to yeild unto them when they speak to, or command them in any matter? Eye God in his providences, consider what is his mind therein, hear the rod and him that hath appointed it; hearken to him in his word and make a particular application to your own souls of all those counsels and directions which are given in his Ordinances from time to another.

2. Readily embrace his will, and without grumbling or repining, go about every work of God which you are called unto cheerfully: It

is a note of great disobedience of heart, and a thing very grievous unto their Parents, when they see that their Children go about their doing of any thing that they are commanded with an ill will. How acceptable must it needs be unto God, when his Children do their duty so, as in the manner of their doing it, they make it to appear that they take great satisfaction in it? Herein we shew our selves to be like Christ our elder Brother, who rejoyced to do his Fathers will, *Psal. 40. 7.*

3. Endeavour in all things so to carry it that such as take notice of you may see and know whose Children you are: Bear alwayes about with you the Image of God, and labour after an evident representation of his perfections in your whole conversation, *Mat. 5. ult. Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Remember that as there is a real, so there ought to be a manifest difference between the Children of God and the Children of the Devil, *1 Joh. 3. 9. In this the Children of God are manifested.* It is therefore your part to be alwayes shewing the difference; And to that end have a care of conforming your selves in the sinful and carnal courses and customs of the world. Be not afraid, no nor ashamed to run in a stream quite contrary to theirs. And for this be observant of the rules of Gods word, where you may learn to cleanse your way and regulate your lives suitable to your relation.

And

And hence,

1. Shew your selves the Children of God by an holy life and conversation, 1 Pet. I. 15, 16. *As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy, &c.* Live contrary to the worlds filthiness; they love to be wallowing in the mire of fleshly lust, to be polluting themselves with sin; do you abstain from the very appearance of any such thing: God is most holy, and he loves purity, and hates filthiness, and when we do so to, and shew that we do so in our practical conversation, then do we shew our selves to be like him. It is a very great shame that the Sons of God should have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; that believers should be overtaken with the like excesses of riot, drunkenness, wantonness, &c. with unbelievers; this is a great disgrace to the high and honourable calling of the Children of God; holiness becomes his Saints, let then the shine of his Graces irradiat your loves.

2. By expressing an holy confidence in God in all the cases and concernments of your lives: In trouble, affliction, Persecution, distress, contrary to those cares and perplexities of the men of the world, which eat them up, and declare that they have no further to rely upon: we then honour God, and bring credit to Religion, when we can at all times cast our care upon him, believing in his power and promise in our sorest distress;

distress : thus did *David* when he was reduced to the greatest imaginable difficulties, *1 Sam.* 30. 6. *He encouraged himself in the Lord.*

3. By a constant application of your selves to God in all your cases : Children, especially little Children in their minority, are to have their whole dependance upon their Parents, and so should Believers upon their God : When you are in any strait go to him, thus did *Hezekiah*, *Isa.* 38. 14. *I am oppressed, Lord undertake for me.*

Hence,

1. When you want any good thing, go to God for it, and no whither else, ask it of him, and not of a stranger : is it a great disparagement to Parents, and they take it so, for their Children to go to other houses, to beg or steal to supply their wants, it is enough for Orphans, that have none to care for them, to do so. Have you a Father in Heaven, go then and tell him what it is that you need, he will consider of it, and if you do indeed need it, you shall have it ; and if you have it not, you may certainly conclude, it is because his wisdom sees that it is better for you to be without it, you would take harm by it if he should gratifie you in it ; it is for your good to want it, and therefore be content, and do not seek to supply your selves out of his way, for as that would dishonour him, so you may be sure it shall not prosper.

2. When you suffer and are wronged by any,
content

content your selves now to go and tell him of it, and do not seek by any indirect course, or undue means to right your selves. It is the duty of Gods Children to leave all their wrongs and injuries to his righting of them, *Psal. 10. 14. The poor committeth himself unto thee.* God looks upon the recompence of wrongs to be a prerogative of his sovereignty; and his Children have no reason to fear, but that he will plead their cause, and do them right.

4. Be alwayes strengthening and encouraging of your Faith in God, by the frequent consideration of your Adoption: Be much therefore in this contemplation, it affords plentiful and soul-satisfying encouragement to a Child of God in every condition that he can be reduced unto. Hence, improve it.

1. When you are wooed and solicited by Satan to look upon the tempting glories of the things of this world: when honour and pleasures bid hard for your affections, solícite you eagerly to let out your hearts upon them; and it may be their seeming splendor and delicacy may begin to dazzle your eyes and allure your minds, now consider solemnly with your selves who you are, reflect upon your extract, and draw such conclusions as naturally result from it: Say now these things may indeed seem fine and fair baits to poor beggars and fatherless ones, that ly upon the worlds dung-hill; let them then take and share

share them among themselves, let them scramble and see who can get most of them, they may do it, they are not *Themistocles*, they have no better an hope, these are things accommodated to their earthly minds. Check your rambling affections with these considerations; It is below my birth and breeding to take up satisfied with, and place my hearts delight upon such sorry despicable things: this is fit for none but such miserable sneaks* as have nothing else to trust unto: I have otherghue's delights, riches and honours to feed upon, and satiate my Soul withal; I have substances, I will not therefore rest in shadows nor envy such as do.

2. When you are ready to be oppressed and overcome with slavish fears of want, and distresses here in this world, and your minds begin to be distracted about it, cares are multiplying upon you, now rouse up yourselves, and think, who are you that you should afflict and torment yourselves about such matters?

Consider,

1. Have you not a Father in heaven, and will he not take care of you, or can he not supply you? What is it should give you reason to doubt of it? Doth he not take care for things of less value? Be often propounding that question to your selves; *Job. 38. ult. Who provideth for the Raven his food?* Doth not God cloath the Lillies? Do not all eyes wait for him, and

he gives them their meat in due season? Are not the meanest creatures in his family well provided for? And can a Child be neglected? Are not the Lillies gorgeously decked by him, and do not we see the Fowles of the air get a living? God doth all this for them, it is his love and care, and doth he not love you better? Such thoughts as these should quicken our Faith from day to day.

2. Have you not enough to live on? If not, I wish then that you had: Have you not Estates enough to maintein you? Is there not enough in heaven and earth to supply the wants of one poor creature? what if this earth should fail, and all these lower springs should be dryed up (and indeed they may so do, for these are waters that sometimes fail) yet still there is enough to be had in heaven: Is not an Almighty God sufficient to be your portion? Well then, draw up this conclusion with yourselves, if this World will afford me nothing, if I can get no relief here below, yet I will go to heaven for it, and as long as my God and Father is there, I will not despair.

3. When you find in your selves an impotency, to the performance of your duty, in serving of God: Your knees are feeble, and your hands hang down, and you feel your selves ready to faint in the work of God which you are called unto; now gather strength again by musing upon
pon

this : I can do nothing of my self, yet I will go to him, and he shall do all for me, I will wait upon him, and he shall worke all my works in me. I cannot Pray as I ought, but he shall help all my infirmities, he shal make requests in me, form Petitions for me, and fill the Sails of my Soul with his heavenly Gales; and my desires, though in themselves they are low and dull, shal (by his mighty assistance) be waisted along to Heaven with the stiff Gales of sighs and groans that cannot be uttered : I fall short in duty, and there is sin and imperfection in every service which I set my self about ; but his work in me shal give my poor (but sincere) performances acceptance with God : Yea, I am a Child, and therefore my weak, but true endeavours shal never be despised by a Father whose love can over all my frailties.

4 When your Sins appear before you with a terrible aspect, and Satan would make you afraid to come before God by reason of them : When he represents him to your thoughts as a consuming fire, as appearing in his wrath and displeasure, and would perswade you to believe there is no favour for you, that such sins, and so circumstanced as yours are, will find no remission : Now reflect ; but am I not still a Child ? and if so, then I am sure, that though he correct me (and I deserve it, nor will I refuse to submit my self patiently unto it) yet he cannot

take away his loving kindness from me: I will therefore appear before him, and take the blame and shame of my sins upon my self, and if he be angry, I will bear it because I have sinned: I will yeild my self to his pleasure, and receive his strokes, and I know they shal be wounds which shal not kill, but heal my Soul: I will confess (and not cover) my sins, and so ly down before him, and let him say what he will unto me, I will still say, good is the word of the Lord, and if he be wroth with me for a little season, I will wait till it be overpast, because I know assuredly that his love to me shal endure for ever.

5. When you are strongly oppressed with the slavish fear of Death: When the fore thoughts of your going out of this world are distressing thoughts to your mind; especially being (either by gray hairs, those Blossoms of the Grave, or by pining sicknesses, &c. by the dangers of troublesome times growing) warned of the probable nearness and approach of it, and you are hereby put out of frame, and greatly hurried and disquieted in your spirits; think now and meditate: But was ever a Child unwilling to go home, especially where he knew that he should have all things according to his hearts desire, and was at present under manifold troublesome exercises? Is rest a thing so unwelcome or ungrateful to the weary man? why then should I shrink from

it? Did not my dearest Saviour comfort himself with this thought, when he drew near to a most cruel and bitter Death, yet he was going to his Father, and my Father? And am I unwilling to go to my Fathers House, to that Pallace and Court, where I (who have been a stranger all this while in a strange Country, going under a disguise, so as the World I live in knows me not, and therefore despiseth and persecuteth me) shall be set forth and adorned like the Child of a King? And what! Is it a thing so hard to bear, and that which should make me to draw back and fly from it? is to be stript out of these rags of mortality, this dirty defiled garment of flesh, and to receive in exchange for it those Princely Robes of Glory, and be made to appear in such Oriency and splendor, as will out-shine the light of the Sun in the firmament? And is this the thing I am so much afraid of? Is it this at which my thoughts do so much, start and give back? No, no, I will not fear, but make all the hast I can that I may in due season finish my work, and go home: The World is weary of me, and would gladly part with me; and I am as weary of it, and as willing to leave it: And were it not that I have a little work to do for the glory of my God and Father here, I could be content forthwith to be gone: However, I am willing to tarry on his business, but when my Father shal please to call, I will say,

Lord, here am I; and in the mean while, I will wait till my chang comes.

5. Be alwayes comforting of your selves with the thoughts of your Adoption: Draw your comforts at this Tap, fetch your Consolations from this relation; be therefore often chewing upon the precious priviledges of it, and make them your rejoycing. Hence,

1. Let this joy out-strip the verdure of every other joy, let all earthly delights and pleasures, as it were wither before it: There are many things in which it is lawful to take some content, many things which God hath appointed to give us some comfort in this life, but all these delights should like starrs disappear before this Sun, *Luk. 10. 20. In this rejoyce not, that the spirits are sub-
ject to you, but rather rejoyce that your Names are
written in Heaven.* Count all other things comparatively not deserving the boasting of, *Psal. 4. 7.*

2. Let this joy dispel the mists of every sorrow, and clear up your souls in the midst of all troubles and difficulties. With it *David* labours to get his heart up, *Psal. 42. ult.* Dwel therefore much upon these thoughts; who it is that hath owned you for his Child? The great God: What he hath done for you, viz. Taken you under his care, given you his Spirit, set you at liberty from thraldome, confirmed you in a title to all his good things, bestowed upon you a
Royal

Royal Guard of glorious Angels : And what he intends to do, having assured you of it by promise, and will ere long accomplish it : Live in the midst of your Priviledges and Dignities, and be sucking the sweet out of them. Live above the World, above sin, above life, above Death, let nothing terrifie you, nothing perplex nor stumble you, you are Children, and then Heirs, and then you may well reckon all sufferings as inconsiderable things, and triumphantly wait, and joyfully look for the manifestation of the Children of God, who, when they shal be brought forth in their Royalty, at the second coming of Christ, shal be the wonder and astonishment of Angels, wicked Men, and Devils.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

Our Apostle having thus encouraged those unto whom he writes, to constancy in their Faith, and to stand it out in opposition unto Antichrist, and all the seductions of such as would pervert them, and that by the consideration of their sonship, and the Glorious dignity of it, and laboured to perswade them in the belief of the verity of it, by a bold and confident conclusion, asserting it to be so; In these and the remaining words of the *Vers.* he obviates an objection, which the Children of God may be

ready, in an hour of Temptation, to raise, *viz.* If we are Sons, as you say we be, how comes it to pass then that we are so treated in the world, and that God seems to take so little care of us? that our outward condition here is not better, but rather much worse, than the condition of other men? We are persecuted, reviled, trodden upon, and our spiritual condition also is full of trouble and Temptation, as if God did not regard us at all: We are outwardly mean and sorrowful, and inwardly molested; and is this the way in which God is wont to treat his Children? If we are his Sons, he seems to deal better with his enemies than with his Sons: Thus we find *Asaph* was once tempted, *Psal. 73.* Thus *Rebeckah*, when the Children struggled in her womb, was ready to say, *If the Lord be with me, why is it thus?* That he may either prevent or remove this difficulty, the Apostle layes down two conclusions.

1. That the time is not as yet come, for the manifestation of that happiness whereof they are the undoubted Heirs.

2. He declares what their glorious estate shall be when that time doth come.

It is the first of these we have under our present consideration. These words relate to the foregoing by way of Prolepsis, and hence the copulative [And] is put for the exceptive [but] is frequent in that Language; The words

are a general assertion, wherein two things are observable.

1. The subject, or that of which the assertion is, *What we shall be*: By the which he intends that happiness and Glory to which the sons of God are appointed; their future felicity.

2. The Predicate, or that which is asserted concerning it, *viz. It doth not yet appear*. The Proposition is limited in respect of time, but unlimited in respect of persons.

1. In respect of time, it is restrained to the present, *Not yet, q. d.* There is a little time in which we must be content to pass in a disguise, and not look like our selves, but it will not be long; The word [*ετι*] is used only to express some small inconsiderable particle of time, or delay: And when he saith, *Not yet*, he withal insinuates that it will not be long: It is but during the time that the life lasts, and when that comes to an end there will be a beginning of that discovery, and in the last day a full and perfect.

2. In respect of Persons, it is unrestrained, he doth not say to whom it doth not appear, but only in general affirms, that *it appears not*. Indefinite propositions are equivalent to universal. Hence we are to understand all men to be here intended: and the word translated, to appear [*παρρησια*] signifyeth, clearly, openly, permanently to appear, to be discerned or seen in open view. Hence,

Hence,

Doct. The future happy Estate unto which the Children of God are appointed, is a thing not clearly known by any in this Life.

Those Glorious Beatitudes, which are bound up and reserved for the entertainment of God's Adopted Children in the highest Heavens, are things which be not clearly seen or understood in this World.

In the prosecution of this *Doctrine*, we may first attend the Demonstration of it, and then consider the Grounds,

1. By way of Evidence or Demonstration: The Truth may be understood and cleared by an induction of particulars; And that.

1. Negatively; And here,

1. This Indefinit doth not comprehend God under it: For he thoroughly and perfectly knows what his own thoughts of love and good-will are to his Children; He hath predestinated them to their inheritance, and laid out in his everlasting Decree what their portion shall be, *Eph. 1. 11, In whom we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated, &c.* God cannot be ignorant of his own Counsels, which, have been manifestly known to him from all eternity, *Acts. 15. 18, Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the World.* He knows what his own thoughts

thoughts are, &c. Those thoughts of peace which he hath for his People, *Jer. 29. 11.* These things are not under debate with him who is for ever unchangeable.

2. Neither doth Jesus Christ come under the Negative: our glorified Redeemer hath a full and thorough view of all those happineses which his Redeemed are to partake in: He knows what it is that he hath purchased and paid for with his own Blood; it is called the purchased Possession: And wise men do not wont to buy and pay at peradventure: Nay, he must needs know it: For,

1. He hath taken possession of it: He is entered into Glory, he is exalted into the Throne, and enjoyeth those fulness of joyes, and those Rivers of pleasures, *Heb. 12. 2.* And it is the very same Glory which he now hath, unto which the Children of God shal ere long be brought, *Job. 17. 22.* *The Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.*

2. He is gone before to make ready the place of Glory, and prepare for the entertainment of his People, *Job. 14.* begin. It is one part of his Meditorial inployment, now he is ascended into Heaven, to be making all ready for the Children of God against they come there: And how can he make ready except he knows what it is that he hath to prepare for them?

2. Dubiously, and that with respect.

1. To

1. To the blessed Angels: How far forth God is pleased to reveal this to them, who are ministering spirits for the carrying on of this work, is not to us known; or, wherein their Glory, and the glory of Saints agree, and wherein they differ, is not within our ken: It is certain, that mans Salvation by Christ, was once to them a mysterious truth, and they have been gazing upon it with deepest admiration: Yet doubtless they know a great deal of this matter.

2. To the Souls of Just men made perfect: They are now indeed *Comprehensors*, and know well enough the happiness they are in possession of, but what discerning or comprehension have they of those complements of Glory, which in the Resurrection, and after the Day of Judgment shal be added to them, we cannot tell: The words after my text seem to speak of the last day, as being a day of some peculiar discovery: We must therefore for the present leave these two and say nothing definitely of them.

3. Positively, and here we may truly affirm, and make it appear, that,

1. None of the Devils know; it doth not appear to them what the Sons of God shal be: They may indeed give shroud ghuesses, and understand that it shal be very great: For, being created in the third Heaven, and having seen the Glory of it, they must needs know that the People of God, in so far as they are appointed

ed for the place, will be wondrously glorious; and their knowing of so much of it, makes them so extreemly envious at them and their happiness: But still, after what manner the Bride, the Lambs Wife, shal be entertained in the great day, when the marriage shal be consummate, & he shal carry her home to his own Pallace, they cannot tell, the Angels of Glory cannot know it, but by relation, and we cannot suppose that God will make special discoveries now to the Devils: They may remember what the place was by Creation, but what it shal be when Christ hath further prepared it, is not for them to understand.

2. It doth not appear to wicked men, what the Sons of God shal be: The World are strangers, and intermeddle not with their joy: The truth is, the World are so far from knowing what they shal be, that they do not know what they are at present: There are Inchoate felicitys which the Saints have in this life, which unregenerate men have no notice, or cognizance of: they have their feasts, their joyes, their consolations, their boastings, that are riddles to the ungodly: They know not what the countrey feast of a good Conscience means, how then should they understand what are the Provisions of the Kingdom of Glory? The Children of God have their joyes and ravishments here, and these strangers have no acquaintance with them.

Sound

Sound Divines interpret that, 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not seen, &c.* To be meant of these, and that it is spoken, concerning ungodly men is evident, because he excepts Believers, *vers. 10.* *But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.* Those smiles of God's Countenance, those inward supports of heart, that sweet communion which their Souls have with God in an Ordinance, in hearing the Word, at a Sacrament, in their Closets, on their knees powring out of their Prayers and tears into the bosom of their Father: Those holy transports are riddles, and matters of laughter and scorn to them, and if they know not what is, how should they understand that which is to come?

3. The Children of God themselves whiles they are here, do not fully know what they shall be, it doth not yet appear to them:

It is true,

1. The Word of God hath said a great deal concerning their future Glory. There are many high and towring expressions, to our apprehension, used in the Scripture, worthy descriptions of that great City and the Inhabitants of it, and if we would study the Scripture more we might know more of it: But yet when we arrive at the Kingdom and come once to see, and view, and experience it, we shall say as the Queen *Sheba* to *Solomon*, 1 King. 10. 6, 7.

2. The People of God have their sips and foretastes

tasts, and first fruits of this Glory here: They are made to tast of those Graps of which the Wine is made in *Canaan*: They have not only their assurances, but also sometimes their extasies: They are taken into the Mount, rapt up into the third Heaven, their souls are lifted up aboue the world, and all that is in it. God is pleased at some times to carry them out so farr in their meditations, and reveal so much of himself and his infinit love to their contemplation, that they are loth to come down, or to have any thing more to do with the sink and puddle of this world: They know so much of that after state, that when they are under these precious discoveries, and the irradiations of the Spirit of God upon their souls, they cry out, Who will give me the wings of a Dove, that I might mount up and be gone: And with *Paul* their hearts are carried forth with a longing desire to depart and be with him in full possession of all this Glory: But,

3. A full, clear, and manifest discovery of their happiness, is not made to any of God's People here: They that have seen most of heaven, while upon this earth, have seen it but in Landskip: They that have had the most ravishing tasts of the love of God, have but imperfectly tasted it: All our knowledge, all our sight here is but in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. *We know but in part.* That which is perfect is yet to come,

vers.

vers. 10. They are but dawnings at the most which we have here : what those rayes will be, which shal beam forth from the Sun of Righteousness, in the mid-day splendour of Celestial Glory, we now cannot tell, but must be content to wait till we go thither where it is to be seen and enjoyed.

2. For the ground of the *Doctrine*; or reason why it doth not yet appear.

1. God makes it not known to the ungodly,

1. Lest they should be allured by it : All which they hear and enjoy here must therefore be *Enigmatical* or obscure to them, lest they should be converted ; it is an awful word, but Christ himself hath spoken it, who knew his Fathers, and his own mind and purpose; *Mar.*

4. 11. 12. *To them that are without these things are done in parables, &c.* Lest at any time they should be *Converted*.

2. That they may by Persecutions and oppositions try the Graces of his Children : There is great use and fruit in this tryal, it is more precious than that of Gold : And God is pleased to use wicked men as instruments of the tryal ; And hence they shall not know who these be, nor what their Glory is ; for if they did, they would without doubt suspend, if not in love, yet in fear of them : Christ himself must come in a disguise that so the determined Counsel of God might be fulfilled in him ; *1. Cor. 2. 7, 8.* They would

would else never have Crucified him.

2. The reason also why the People of God themselves have no comprehensive discovery of their own future estate,

1. Because it is too big a sight for their weak eyes to gaze upon: They must be prepared for their Glory, as well as their Glory for them, or else it would swallow them up; *Rom. 9. 23.*

Hence,

When Christ is upon the one work in Heaven, the Spirit of Christ is on the other here. Should a full description of that state be given us, it must be in a Language which we understand not. They are but dark similitudes, dim and dull comparisons, accommodated to our own weak capacity, which the Scripture affords: The words which *Paul* then heard, when he was in the third Heaven, were ineffable words, and such as were not lawful to utter, *2 Cor. 12.*

4. Not unlawful, because forbidden by any precept, but because they did out-bid his ability. If the Glory to be revealed, should now be revealed to us in this our imperfect state, it would over oppress and sink us.

2. That they may with more patience abide the time allotted them here, and serve there Generation in the doing of that work which God hath set out for them to do before they go to be possessed of this Glory. We find, that after *St. Paul's* rapture, he had great wrestlings with his

his own spirit, and much ado to keep up in himself a willingness to tarry here any longer, *Phil. 1. 21. I am in a strait, between two, Having a desire to depart :* And such have been the frames of God's dear Children, after that they have had some extraordinary beamings of his love, and been feasted by him with some special visits, they have been long ere they could quiet themselves from longing and praying, that the Chain might be cut, and they might hoise Sail and be gone: Might the Saints be permitted to know here, as much as shall be known hereafter, it would be harder perswading them to be willing to live, than it is now to make them willing to dy.

USE, I. For informations learn we from Hence,

1. The reason why the Children of God are so little regarded here in the World; it is because the World knows not who they are, nor what they are born unto: Their great Glory for the present is within; outwardly they look like other men, they eat, drink, labour, converse in earthly imployments, as others do; the communion which they have with God in all of these, is a secret thing: They are Sick, Poor, Naked, Distressed like other men; those inward supports which they have under all those exercises, are remote from publick view: They dy, and are buried under the Clods, and their bodies

dyes putrifie and rot like other men; and none see those joyes that their souls are entred into, nor that guard of Angels which comes as a Con- voy, and carryes them into *Abraham's* bosom: Nay, they have their sins, their spots, their im- perfections and weaknesse here, as well as other men; but their tears, repentance, secret mour- nings, and renewals of Faith, and restorings to peace and soul-comfort, are secret.

And hence,

Though the Righteous Man be indeed surpass- ingly more excellent than his neighbour, yet is he not thought so to be: Whereas, did the World see and understand, whose sons they are, what inheritances they are the undoubted heirs of, and what are those Glories they shall ere long be made to possess, it would alter their opinion, and make them afraid of them, and not dare to do them any wrong. How fearful was *Abime- lech* of *Abraham*, when God did but tell him he was a Prophet? *Gen. 20. 7, 8.*

2. Here we see the reason why the People of God are often so doubtful, disquiet, discontent, and afraid to dy (I put things together) The ground of all this is because they do not as yet see clearly what they shall be: It would be a matter of just wonderment to see the Children of God so easily and often shaken, so disturbed and perplexed in hours of Temptation, were it not from the consideration, that they at pre-

sent know so little of themselves or their happiness: Sometimes their sonship it self doth not appear to them, but they are in the dark, at a loss about the evidencing of it to the satisfaction of their own minds; and from hence it is that many doubtings arise, and their souls are disquieted. Sometimes their present sufferings look bigger in their thoughts, than the conceptions or apprehensions which they entertain of their future Glory, these things being near, and the other looked on at a distance, and hence they out-weigh, in their rash judgments, and now they are disquiet and discontent, and say with him, *Psalm 73. 13. I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.* And usually in these good frames, they apprehend more of the sweetness of present Communion with God in his Ordinances, than of that blessed immediate communion in Glory; and this makes them, with good *Hezekiah*, to turn away their faces from the messages of death and change: All these things are arguments of the weak sight and dark thoughts which we here have of the things of another world: which yet, it is the holy pleasure of God, that it shall be so a while, for the advancing of his own ends in his Saints.

3. Learn hence a reason why the present sufferings of God's Children can neither argue against, nor yet prejudice their felicity: for the
time

time is not yet come wherein they are to appear like themselves: *Joseph's* prisoned condition, and prison robes set him never the further off from his preferment in *Pharaoh's* Court; but were indeed the very harbingers of it: When the appointed time for the manifestation of the Sons of God shall come, he can fetch them out in hast, change them in the twinkling of an eye, and cloath them upon with all that excellency and splendid Glory, whereby, they who were but the other day lying among the pots, shall with their dazzling lustre outshine the Sun in the Firmament. It is the Almighty's good pleasure, that their life, for the present, should be hid with Christ in God: But yet he hath his time, and will take his opportunity to reveal and make it known.

4. This teacheth us that the Glory of the sons of God must needs be wonderfully and astonishingly great: For why? Have they not already in hand, that which surpasses the knowledge of all the world, and which is in value transcendently more worth than all the Crowns and Kingdoms, and Glories of it? Do they not live upon, and satisfie their souls with marrow and fatness here, *Psal.* 63. 5. Are they not here replenished with the fatness of God's house? *Psal.* 36. 8. Who, but he that enjoys it, can declare what an happiness it is to enjoy peace with God, and fellowship with Christ, assurance of his love,

and consolation of his spirit? Who, but he that hath felt it, can tell what it is to have the love of God shed abroad in his heart, and in his Soul to hear the sweet voice of Pardon, and promises of Glory? to ly all night in the bosom of Christ, and have his left hand underneath his head, and his right hand imbracing of him? And yet he that knows all this doth not know what he shall be; These are but the displays of the outward Temple, or holy place; what then is to be seen in the holy of Holies? These are but drops, and rivulets which come in Pipes, and in little portions; how glorious a thing then must it needs be to dwell at the fountain, and swim for ever in those bankless, and bottomless Oceans of Glory? How happy then are the dead in Christ, who are now seeing, tasting, knowing and experiencing these things?

USE, II. For Exhortation, learn we hence.

1. Not to judge of our selves, or of our own state by our present sense; It is the delight of Satan to be keeping the thoughts of the Children of God looking, and poring upon their present sinful and sorrowful condition, that they may be held under discouragement by thinking themselves miserable, but we live by hope, and *Hope that is seen is not hope, Rom. 8. 24.* As often then as your sense would dishearten you, now betake your selves to, and stir up your Faith; set your selves to meditate upon the unknown Glories

Glories which are coming; and think them not less but greater, because they appear not; this being one main reason why they do not as yet appear, because they are too big for our present comprehension.

2. Think it not hard that God should call you to present sufferings for his Name, but let the consideration of that unseen Glory that is a coming, arme and animate you for whatsoever Dayes of trouble you may have good reason to think are not afarr off, that when they do come, they may not be burdensome, but may weigh light: Learn therefore of *Paul*, to place the scales right, that you may be able to draw the same conclusion which he doth, when you come to weigh your future felicities, that you have in hope, against all the present sorrows and sufferings you are at the present undergoing for Christ, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.*

3. Wait patiently for your Glory: though you do not now enjoy it, no nor make a full and through discovery of it at the present, yet be patient and wait, and you have those encouragements so to do.

1. The time is not long: It is but when he shall appear,* Context. There is a little work for you to do for God here, and then the reward: And as you have need of patience for this, that when you have done the will of God you may receive the reward, *Heb. 10. 36.* So there is thus given

to animate you in the chearful exercise of it, that it is but a *little while*, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, *vers. 47.* Christ is but gone to heaven to prepare, and then he will come again for you.

3. You have mean while good security for it: There are the many precious promises in the Book of God, engaging his faithfulness & truth, and power to the performance of it: you have the seal of the spirit for it, *Who hath sealed you to the day of Redemption, Eph. 4. 30.* And you have all those earnestness which are given in the inchoative felicity, which you have found, in those tastes that you have had of the love of God in Christ, and all these are built upon a foundation of God, and in an eternal Decree, which must stand sure, and what would you have more?

3. This glory is worth the waiting for: I am not able to tell you what it is, no, nor, if an Angel should come and declare it to us, are we who dwell in mortal bodies, capable of understanding it: But this we may know, that it will recompence all our Faith and Patience, all our sorrows and sufferings; nay, all the sufferings of this present life are not worthy of the Glory that shall be revealed; If it did appear, and our bleare eyes could now look upon it without dazling, it would not be so great as it now is, which when it shall appear, will transport us with everlasting admiration, that shall eccho back in eternal Hallelujahs.

But

But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

Our Apostle having in the foregoing words endeavoured to satisfy those whom he writes unto, in the reason why, Notwithstanding they were sons of God, and consequently great heirs, their condition was at the present so obscure, *viz.* Because the time of their manifestation was not yet come, he proceeds in the rest of this *Vers.* to encourage and strengthen their Faith in the consideration of the Glory which shall in due time be revealed in them: It is *q. d.* Have patience, and tarry but a little while, and then you shall look like your selves, and have Glory enough to declare you unspeakably happy.

The words before us are an assertion concerning the future happiness of God's Adopted Children, in which we may take notice of three things that are worthy of our diligent observation, *viz.* 1. The certainty and evidence of it, *We know.* 2. The time when it shall be; *When he shall appear.* 3. The nature of it, or that wherein it shall mainly consist: *We shall be like him.* We may take up these in their order.

1. For the certainty and evidence of it. *We know.* The word [*εἶδέναι*] signifies to know certainly; and the Apostle useth the word in opposition to an uncertain guess or conjecture, by

by which a man doth but only probably suppose that the thing may be so.

Here observe,

1. The thing which he here asserts to be known, is the future glorious estates of the Sons of God: It is that condition which is reserved for them, and unto which they shall in due time be brought, for his present discourse properly relates unto what they shall be in the great Day.

2. Concerning this knowledge it is considerable.

1. That he clearly intimates the object to be a thing knowable, or that which hath its evidence, it is *q. d.* though what it shall be appears not plainly to us, yet that it shall be is out of the reach of doubting: Or, though we cannot understand it in its Latitude, yet we may discern its futurity.

2. That he doth not Monopolize this knowledge to himself and the rest of the Apostles, as though it were a peculiar privilege to them, coming in a way of extraordinary revelation; but he makes it a common favour bestowed upon the Children of God.

And hence,

Coming by ordinary means: He doth not say, I know it, and give you my testimony of it, which you may credit; but we know: you and I have the evidence of it in our selves, and such grounds

grounds of certainty upon which we may safely draw this conclusion.

Hence,

Doct. As the future Glorious Estate of the Children of God is a thing certain in itself, so it is that whereof they may also have a certain and infallible Knowledge.

Though they cannot tell how well it shall be with them, yet that it shall be well, they may know: That their is a remaining Glory, and that that Glory shall be theirs: Not only that their is a number of the Children of Men who shall be blessed in the eternal enjoyment of God in Christ, but that they also in particular are of that number: And this indeed is a main and essential part of a Believers present inchoative happiness. that now he knows, and is firmly persuaded of it, that he shall be happy for ever.

Knowledge is here opposed Negatively, or Privatively to ignorance, disparately to opinion, And in the clearing up of this point, we may, 1. Consider something of the nature of knowledge in general, And then, 2. In particular evidence that our future happiness comes within the reach of it.

1. Concerning Knowledge in general, we may observe, that the proper and suitable object of

of the understanding is Truth, in the search and contemplation whereof it is employed, and when it is so employed, it is about its own work, and Truth being a property or affection of every being that is.

Hence,

The understanding applies it self to the searching of Truth in the things that be: Now these truths are either, simple and single, such as are the several affections, inclinations, and tendencies in things, which the understanding finds out and layes by themselves, and whereby it is furnished for further discoveries: Or else they are compound; when the understanding, discovering a subject, and having found out those simple truths which concern it (or supposing it self so to have done) it puts them together, and makes an Axiom, sentence, assertion, or negation about them. Now there are various postures in which the understanding may stand to the things; and various affections in which the things may stand related one to another. I intend not the distinct producing of all that here might be said on this account, but only so far as is to our present purpose.

1. Referring to the understanding: Sometimes it discernes not the ground of the composition, or relation of one thing to another.

And hence,

It can declare or conclude nothing at all about

bout it; and this is that which we call ignorance. Sometimes this ignorance is attended with a fond apprehension that he doth see it; mistaking, and confidently concluding it to be that which it is not; & this is properly Error, which is built upon Ignorance accompanied with an opinion of knowledge. Sometimes he doth see or discern these differences, and is able to make a true Aphorisme, or Declaration about them, and this is called Judgement; which is nothing else but a skill of putting simple Truths together, right as they should be, and according to the natural and genuine relation they have each to the other so as to make them into a true conclusion.

2. Relating to the things themselves: We must consider that the reason of our compounding, or putting Truths together, is, from some connexion which there is, and appears to us to be between them: as when I see that there is a connexion between the nature of Man and Reason, my judgment thence compounds and concludes that Man is a reasonable creature. Now these connexions are not all alike, some are tyed of a slip knot, or are so connected as they may easily be separated; such is the Relation between all contingent causes and effects, or only probable and conjectural antecedents and consequents: as when we say, the diligent hand maketh rich; here is some rational connexion between diligence and prosperity, but yet there are so many casualties

casualties in the over-ruling Providence of God, that may check and over-bear this, that sometimes it falls out that we labour in the fire for very nothing ; sow much and bring in little, and when we say it will be a fair day for the evening is red, though this be an ordinary symptom, yet it is no infallible presage, it is oftentimes so, and sometimes otherwayes : Now the judgement of these things is called Opinion, because it is a conclusion that is drawn from reasons which are only probable and contingent. But other connexions are tyed of a fast knot ; they flow from the very nature of the things, & are therefore necessarily predicated of the subject, and it cannot be without them : Such are all natural Causes and effects, as when we say the Sun shines, Man is a reasonable Creature, &c. And the judgement of these things is that which we call Science or Knowledge : viz. When we discover, and conclude necessary effects from necessary Causes, & necessary causes from necessary effects ; now such as this is, is that Knowledge which a Child of God may have of his future Glory.

Hence,

2. I come to make it evident in particular that our after happiness may be thus known and there will need but these two things to be cleared for the proof of it : viz. 1. The happiness of beleevers depends upon necessary causes.

causes

And

2. That their sanctified reason is capable of searching out and discovering the truth of these causes and so concluding infallibly.

1. That the happiness of beleivers depends upon necessary causes: my meaning is, that there is such a connexion between the Causes of Salvation, and Salvation it self, that they cannot fail to bring it about, *viz.*

1. The immutable will of God purposing and resolving of it: with this our Saviour encourageth his Disciples, *Luk. 12. 32. Fear not little flock it is your Fathers pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* The foundation of this happiness was laid in Gods Decree; this is the Book of Life in which their Names were written; here began that everlasting love, which is the cause and fountain of all the grace afterwards revealed: this is the writing that receives no blots; this is the Record that admits of no alterations; this is the foundation of God which stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows who are his: Hence we have *Paul* bringing down of this foreknowledge infallibly unto Glory, in that chain of his, *Rom. 8. 29. 30.*

3. The Redemption of Christ purchasing and procuring of it for them: eternal Glory is one part of that purchase for which Jesus Christ laid down that great price: and it was sealed up to him in the Covenant of Redemption for those

those whom he was to redeem; and this purchase is made sure and ratified, and that not only in respect of the purchase it self, for which he hath payed, and of which payment he hath received a full acquittance in his resurrection, and is actually put in possession, being ascended up into Heaven, and there invested with the tenure and possess of the Crown of Glory; but also in respect of the persons for whom it is bought, and on whom it is to be bestowed. Hence Christ, speaking of the Elect, declare that it was for their sakes that he did that work, *Job. 17. 9.* And professeth that he had lost none of those whom his Father had given to him, *vers. 12.*

Hence,

We read of purchased possession, *Eph. 1. 14.* And an inheritance reserved for us in the Heavens, *1 Pet. 1. 3.* And of Christ willing that all of them should be with him, *Job. 17. 24.*

3. Unalterable promises made to them: Believers are said to be heirs of the promise; They have great promises, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* Eternal felicity comes within the compass of the promise which is made to them, *Psal. 84. 11.* The Lord shall give Grace and Glory. *Joh. 3. 36.* He that believeth hath everlasting life, and this promise is firm and stable; it is not a mutable thing, because it is made by an immutable God, and it cannot fail because uttered by the mouth of God that

that cannot lie. And from hence the Apostle argueth the necessity of our felicity, in *Heb.* 6. 17, 18.

4. Infallible Conditions ; such as are necessary, not only *κατα παντος* or universally, as *Job.* 3. 26. *Whosoever believeth*, &c. But also *αλλοι* reciprocally, as *Mat.* 16. 16. *He that believes shall be saved, he that believes not shall be damned.* When therefore God worketh these conditions in the souls of any; when he sanctifieth the means to become unfailing helps to Faith, and bring the Soul to repent and believe in Christ, that foundation is laid, that shall aspire to a building unmoveable: this is to be built upon the Rock, *Mat.* 7. 24, 25. This is a seed which, when sown, is immortal and abiding; these gifts and callings are without repentance.

5. Powerful and unfailing assistance: They are said to be in God's, and in Christ's hand; and, as it is certain that they will not throw them out, so it is equally certain that no other can pluck them out: There are those indeed who do attempt it, but in vain, *Job.* 10. 27, 28. God's Omnipotency is the Garrison or guard to which they are committed, on purpose that they may enjoy Salvation, *1 Pet.* 1. 5. *Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation.* They are given to Christ and he hath commended them to the care and keeping of his Spirit, and he seals them up to the day of Redemption, *Eph.* 4. 30.

1. The Believers sanctified reason is capable of searching out and discovering the truth of these causes, and so to conclude infallibly. The evidence of this assertion will then be plain, when we have considered.

1. That there are such effects of these causes wrought in the souls of all the Children of God, as are peculiar and proper to them, there is that done in and for every Child of God, which is wrought in and for no other in the world. Proper effects are undeceiving evidences of their causes. The Apostle speaks of *things that accompany Salvation*, Heb. 6. 9. There is a faith which is *the faith of Gods Elect*, Tit. 1. 1. There is a vocation which is linked fast unto following glory, Rom. 8. 29, 30. There is a knowledge of God in Christ, which is *Eternal life*, Job. 17. 3. There is a sealing of the spirit which confirms everlasting happiness to us, Eph. 4. 30. There is an earnest now given by which God confirms the title of the Inheritance to the Souls of his People, Eph. 1. 14.

2. That these effects are discernable and legible, and that not only by special revelation, but also in a rational way of arguing and inferring. If this were not a truth, then all such Scripture-precepts as put us upon this duty, of self-examination in respect of our spiritual estate, were in vain, and meerly superfluous. It is true, the law puts us upon duties impossible to fallen man,
and

and this course God useth with us, to make us know our need of Christ : But the Gospel puts Believers upon nothing but what may be done : Now this is made the Believers duty, in divers Gospel-respects, 2 *Per.* 1. 10. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. Nay, why should the Gospel propound Rules of tryal to us, if there were no discovery to be made by the application of them ? Of what use is a Touch-stone to us, if by applying of it, we could not be able to make discovery what Mettle is genuine, and what is deceitful ?

3. That every Child of God is furnished for this discovery : He hath an habitual power in him, and sufficient help afforded unto him for the discerning these effects.

For,

1. The effects themselves are manifestly distinguishable from the common Graces of Moral Men, and the counterfeit graces of hypocrites, though they may have some resemblance, yet there are differencing notes, 1 *Job.* 3. 10. *In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil.*

2. Every Child of God hath a conscience whereby he is able to reflect upon himself to take a Survey of his own actions, to see what is in him, and to compare it by the rule, and to judge of it accordingly.

Hence,

We shall find *Paul* making an appeal to the

Testimony of his own Conscience, 2 Cor. 12.

3. The Spirit of God dwells in the understanding and conscience of every Believer, to illuminate it, and to give it a judgement, and discerning of spiritual things, 1 Cor. 2. 10, 14. and this is a common priviledge of all Believers, they have all of them the indwelling spirit to help them in their work.

4. The Spirit of Adoption is also a witness in a Child of God, to confirm and ratifie the testimony which his Conscience gives concerning the premises, whence there are two substantial witnesses to the same truth.

Hence,

He is said to bear witness with our spirit Rom. 8. 16.

4. By the discovery of these present effects he is infallibly assured that he shall inherit Glory hereafter. A state of Grace, and of Glory, have but their gradual differences: Grace is Glory begun, Glory is Grace finished or perfected. Grace is the seed whereof glory is the genuine Fruit: Grace, if it dy not, will bring forth glory undoubtedly; but it cannot dy, being an immortal seed, and abiding. True grace is a spring that never ceaseth flowing till it reach eternal Life, Job. 4. 14. Paul counts it a good argument, and that the inference will hold, that if God hath begun, he will also perfect the good work.

work, *Phil.* 1. 6. God cannot call back his grace for it is without repentance, *Rom.* 11. 29. *Heb.* 13. 5. The Believer cannot renounce nor reject it, for God will not suffer him to depart away from him, *Ezek.* 36. 27. The Devil and all his instruments cannot rob him of it, because they cannot pluck him out of Christ's hand, *Joh.* 10. 29. And when we have said all these things together, Judge now whether this doth not amount to that which may truly and properly be called knowledge, viz, a Judgement of certainty about our everlasting felicity.

USE; I. Here we see one Reason why many of the Children of God bear all the changes of the life with so much quietness and tranquillity; it lyes here, because they have grounded expectations of future glory. The Men of the World wonder at them; yea, scoff and flout, and take them for mad Men, to feed their fancies and hopes with unseen things, and therefore (in their opinion) the greatest uncerteintyes. Truly, if the hopes of the Children of God were grounded in opinion, and depended upon meer contingencies, I cannot see how their life should not be the most perplexed sorrowful and miserable of all men; for if, after they have left all for Christ, it were yet a thing dubitable whether they should ever see and enjoy him in glory, they have indeed nothing left them to lean the weight of their confidence upon; But this is

their felicity in the midst of all turns, that still
 their main interest in eternity is secured : And
 this indeed is the very thing which declares them
 to be the only happy Men: All other Men live by
 meer opinion, these only are the men of know-
 ledge: Other men know not certainly what it
 is that they labour for, nor what shall be the e-
 vent of all their pains and cares; but these men
 know that their labour is not in vain, and that
 there will be a good end of all their troubles and
 pains. As to the things of this life, and with
 respect to subordinate ends, the Children of God
 labour under equal uncerteintyes with other
 men; *Ecc. 9. begin: All things fall out alike to*
all. And *vers. 11. Time and chance happeneth to*
them all. They are not sure to prosper in their
 Estates, to enjoy health, and long life, and ease
 in this World: But as to their last end, and the
 concurrent tendency of all means to it, here
 they have good security, and this makes them
 patient in tribulation, quiet under forest afflictions:
 Thus we find *Paul* argues himself into pa-
 tience and chearfulness, *2 Cor. 4. 17, 18, & 5.*
1. If Storms; nay, Hurrycans arise in their
Voyage, yet they are not amazed, for they know
who is Pilot, and where they shall certainly
Arrive; if they lose all they have in this World,
yea and life it self, yet because they cannot lose
glory, they are not filled with consternation:
For though they cannot tell what that glory shall

be, yet they know that it shall be glory, and such as God himself shall give (that God who doth all things like himself) and they are satisfied that this shall be enough to fill you with everlasting joyes.

USE II. We hence learn how vain are all the attempts of the enemyes of God's Children, wherein they seek to make them miserable, or to discourage them in the service of God. It is true, if their felicity were grounded in contingency, the Saints enemies might have some probable hopes to undermine and blow them up; but those that fight against the truth shall not be able to prevail. That Rock on which the happiness of the Sons of God is built, lyes too deep for all the endeavours of their enemyes to undermine: That truth, that no Child of God shall ever be lost, that no weapon that is formed against them shall ever prosper, that the foundations of the World shall sooner be shaken, the Pillars of the Earth faulter, crack, and crumble in pieces, than they fail of eternal felicity is unchangeable, he that will keep a Child of God from Heaven and happiness, must make void the everlasting purposes of an unchangeable God, violate the eternal Covenant of Redemption, disanul Gods firm and undeciveable promises, kill the immortal seed of grace, overcome the Omnipotent Spirit of God: Till all this can be done, the Believers well-being stands secure: which

which whiles Men and Devils are contriving and endeavouring, he may stand still and smile at their bold and impossible undertakings; and whiles his hope is built, and his eye fixt upon these strong Pillars, it is as vain for them to think to scare or terrifie him.

I confess, if God should hide his face, and withdraw the light of his Countenance, and leave him but a while to combat diffidence and doubting, his Spirit is easily overwhelmed: But if God stand by, and give him the advantage to live in this light, his evidence is so good, and his knowledge so firmly grounded, that all which can be done against him, will but help to confirm him. • Lightly grounded opinions may easily be confuted, by as probable contradictions: But firmly fixed principles, and clear evidences of Divine knowledge, are not shaken by the greatest contradiction of sinners: Such is the perswasion that a Child of God hath of his love to him, that he is withal fully perswaded that all which can be done against it cannot dissolve it, *Rom. 8. 37, 38, 39.*

And hence,

Nothing will prejudice them against God and his service; nothing will turn them out of their way of duty, and obedience to God, because they are not labouring for uncerteintyes, or looking for things that may not be; they live not upon deceivable hopes, they know whom they

they have trusted, and that he is able to keep that which they have committed unto him to the day of the Lord; and therefore are they not weary nor faint, as those that know that in due time they shal reap if they faint not: and though their enemyes may take away their comforts of Life, deprive them of their Estates, of their good name among men, of their liberty, yea of their lives too, yet, because they know they cannot rob them of their glory, therefore are they resolved in their way, and will be faithful unto death.

USE. III. For Exhortation to the Children of God, in two Lessons.

I. Study much for this knowledge: The wise man's assertion, *Light is sweet*, is true of material light, much more of spiritual; and there is never a ray of it which brings more of delight with it, than that which discovers unto us our names written in Heaven: The Philosopher could say, a little knowledge, and that conjectural (which deserves not the title of knowledge) in heavenly things, is to be preferred before a great deal, and that certain, in earthly things: And yet were his thoughts bounded on this side of the third heaven: But here we have the best and surest knowledge, the clearest and most demonstrable light is to be had of the things of eternity. Man's nature inclines him to love knowledge in general; let grace rectifie nature, and

and employ you in the disquisition of theirs, the knowledge whereof can be no less than inchoative happiness. Of all knowledge, that which concerns our selves is the most profitable, and of our selves, that which informs us about our eternity is the most desirable : The souls immortality is discovered by a beam of nature's light, the happiness of some, and misery of others in their immortality is evident by Scripture revelation ; the uncertainty of our present condition here, is known by constant experience : He therefore, and only he can enjoy solid comfort, who hath an hope grounded in knowledge that it shall at last go well with him.

• 2. Make use of this knowledge to establish your hearts against all the evils, and threatened dangers of this present life. The encouragement in our *Text*, as we have heard, is accommodated by our Apostle to the dayes of Antichrist, that he might confirm true Believers, by the consideration of their sonship to a resolute standing by the sincere profession of Christ, and maintenance of an holy life. Their Godliness is the great quarrel which the world have against the Children of God : Their present Sonship, and future glory known, is the great relief they have against the Temptations of such an hour : This knowledge is practical, and the strength of the practice is the being much in exercise of Faith, of which the Apostle gives that encomine

Heb.

Heb. 11. That it is *the evidence of things not seen*. His meaning is, that it makes those future things so plain as if they were present, and gives in such demonstrations of them, that there is no room to call the truth into question. Let the Children of God fear nothing but sin; for all other things commend them to God, and your Souls with them in wel-doing. If you look only upon the revolutions of times, and changes of this lower World, these things may be too intricate for your understanding to resolve; Their tracing of the motion of the wheels of Providence may be too high and hard for you: But if now you do but look foreward as far as Eternity, and take a view of the concerns of that future life (where indeed your great concerns ly) here you may read Lectures of consolation to your own souls, and, knowing and being assured that after a troublesome way the latter end shall be peace, your hearts may be fixt trusting in the Lord.

When he shall appear.

The second thing here asserted concerning the happiness of the Children of God, is the time when it shall be compleated: When he shall appear. There being an Ellypsis in the Words, it hath occasioned divers interpretations, for there is no mention made of the subject appearing.

Hence,

Hence,

Some refer it to the foregoing words, what we shall be, and read it, when it shall appear, and so leave the time indefinite; and yet so it intimates thus much, *viz.* There will be a time when Gods Children shall appear like themselves; others refer it to [Him] their following words, and read it (as our translation) when he shall appear, and expound it of Jesus Christ, and make it parallel to, and interpreted by that of *Paul*, in *Col. 3. 4.* *When Christ, who is our life shall appear, we shall appear with him in Glory.* We have an Ellypsis like this, in *Psal. 87. 1.* *His foundation is in the holy hills,* clearly intimating God. In the *Text* it is, if he shall appear [*ε'αν*] and if we so read it, we are not to take it for an [*If*] of doubting, but only of supposing and connecting; *q. d.* If Christ shall ever appear glorious, then shall Believers too; or, there is as great a certainty of this as of that: but we may observe that is a frequent Hellenisme to put [*If*] for [*When*] and so the most of interpreters take it in this place, and accordingly we may look upon the words as determining the very time wherein the Children of God shall be made visibly to appear what they are, in the state and glory which God hath appointed them unto, *viz.* The appearance of Jesus Christ. Hence,

Doct.

Doct. *When Jesus Christ shall appear in his Glory, then the Children of God shall also appear in theirs.*

Though for the present they walk in a disguise, and ly hid from the knowledge of the World, yet when Christ shall come to make himself known in his Majesty, then shall he also display, and make known the happy estate of all those that have title to his Redemption.

Here we may Consider,

1. What is this appearing of Christ, of which the Apostle speaks?
2. Wherein the Believers blessedness shall then be made to appear?
3. What appearing of Christ *John* here intends?

Ans. There hath been an old error, and of which *Eusebius* makes *Cerinthus* (that blasphemous Heretick) the Author, who lived in the time of the Apostle *John*, and against whom he is supposed to have written his Gospel; which is more accommodable to the Turkish *Alchoran*, then the Christian confession of Faith, which (as the Jews of old, interpreted all old Testament prophecies of the Messiah, of a worldly Kingdom, pomp and glory, and a temporal deliverance from the yoke of the *Roman Empire*)

Empire) puts a carnal interpretation upon many passages in Scripture , and then concludes of Christ's coming in the flesh into the lower world, and setting up a Kingdom here below, bearing date for a thousand years, in which the Saints shal possess the Earth, and, with great outward pomp, carnal pleasures, and voluptuousness, reign over, and have command of the ungodly, in which they shall enjoy all manner of sensual delights ; the very naming of which oppinion is sufficient confutation, it smells so much of the flesh, and savours so much of vanity : And that it hath found so many abettors in these last ages, is an argument that the world grows old and doting. *Mundus senescens patitur phantasias.* There is another apprehension, which hath gained many learned and Godly Men for its Patrons, who, supposing many texts of Scripture to speak without trope or Allegory, do thereon conclude it at least probable, that before the Resurrection of the wicked and ungodly, there shall be a first Resurrection of the Just, wherein Jesus Christ, coming to Judgment, shal openly acquit, and make to reign with him in this lower world, all his Elect and Redeemed ones, for the space of a thousand years ; after which shall follow the general Resurrection of his Enemyes , and the final issue and determination of all those great affairs, when Christ shal return to Heaven and his Saints with him.

him. Whether it shal be thus or otherwise, the day shal determine: All which I dare say of it, is, that it hath no such evidence in the word of God, as to make it a necessary point of Faith, is attended with so many knots and intricacies, as are hard if not impossible by us at present to be resolved; and whatsoever there is that may be alledged for the supporting of it, is capable of a fair solution according to the Scripture dialect, and thereby reducible either to Christ's first coming in the flesh, the state of the New-Testament in general, or the glorious state of the Triumphant Church in the Eternal Kingdom; as divers learned and Orthodox have judiciously made to appear.

But to avoid controversies, and take up with things agreed on: There are two comings of Christ peculiarly celebrated in the Gospel; his coming in a state of Humiliation, and his coming in a state of glory to Judge the World; Which latter is accordingly called his second coming, *Heb. 9. 28. He shall appear the second time.*

As Christ was once seen here in great meanness, and was despised, so he shal be seen even by his Enemies in great glory, and every knee shal bow to him; He shal come in the glory of his Father, and he shal come to Judge the world, *Act. 17. 31. 2 Tim. 4. 1.* This is the appearing of which our Apostle here speaketh: Christ

was

was now gone to Heaven, but he was to come again, and when that shal be, then also shal the Saints manifestation be: Of this he speaks, and with it he encourageth them to confidence *Cap. 2. 28. Abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

In what year and day this appearance of Christ shal commence is not for us to know; the Father hath kept times and seasons in his own hands: but that it is not far off, and will in a short time come to pass, is certain: They are the last times, and a great part of them too is worn out, and therefore it will not be long. There are yet some prophecies unaccomplished, which in Gods good time shal shortly be fulfilled, and then that day cometh: Then shal the Sons of God be seen and known, they shal look then like themselves, and be made to appear no more like servants, but like Sons indeed.

2. Wherein the Believers blessedness shal then be made to appear.

Ans. They shal not only themselves know their own happiness nor only their fellow-glorified Saints and Angels be made acquainted with it, but the World shal see and know it; their enemies shal see it and be confounded at it: Wicked men & devils shal behold their glory so far as to know them to be most happy, *Mic. 7. 10. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, viz. When God bring*

brings her forth to the light as *ver. 9.* which discovery will be made in these things.

1. The Children of God [the Lambs Wife] shall in the morning of the Resurrection be drest up in glorious Splendor, and prepared to meet with Jesus Christ [her Spouse] the Soul (already made perfect in heavenly glory) shall be reunited to its body, which shall leave all imperfections in the Grave, and be adorned with all such perfections as shall render it conspicuously glorious : *Paul* gives us a very notable description of it, *1 Cor. 15. 42, 43, 44.* Its spirituality, immortality, incorruptibility ; its power, its glory shall then be resplendent : they shall rise in the state of the Sons of God, they shall not look any more like abjects, be like dearly beloved Children, being filled with perfect beauty, comeliness, splendor, *Mat. 13. 43.* *Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun, in the Kingdom of the Father.* The dazzling lustre of the Sun is but a dark shadow of the brightness of the bodies of the Saints in the Resurrection : the Church shall then look like a Bride indeed, when it is trimmed up in all its Ornaments of Soul and Body in a state of shining perfection. *Rev. 21. 2.* *Prepared as a Bride adorned for her Husband.*

2. There shall be an happy meeting in the air, in the morning of that day, between Christ and his thus adorned Spouse, where they shall

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meet

meet him, as in the quality of a great Judge, so as their Friend, their Husband, their Saviour, coming to finish and compleat their Salvation, and take them home to himself: they shall meet him who is the beloved of their Souls, whom they have longed for, whom they have often prayed to make hast, and whose appearance they have loved. And the state in which he shall come will add to their glorious manifestation; all that pompous attendance of Angels, those ten thousand times ten thousands, and thousands of thousands of ministring Spirits waiting upon Christs coming to fetch home his Spouse, shall reflect upon them to shew how blessed they are: see 1 Pet. 4. 16, 17. and that glorious coming of Christ, Dan. 7. 9, 10.

3. When the great judgement is set, these shall be placed on the right hand of Christ, *Mat. 25. 23.* He shall set the sheep on his right hand: which is spoken after the manner of Men, intimating the honour and dignity which shall be conferred upon them; and this shall be most conspicuous, *Rev. 1. 7.* Every eye shall see him: and if him then them that are so placed: they shall then appear to be his Favourites and Friends, to be such in whom he takes delight to make them honourable and happy.

4. In the process of the great judgement they shall be openly cleared and acquitted from all those false imputations of Hypocrisie and iniquity

quities, which here were cast upon them, & their sincerity shall be made manifest, and now it shall be known that they were not such fools as the World judged them to have been, that they were not the troublers of *Israel*, as they were censured to be; it shall by this appear that they had a God whom their Enemies thought to have had none: they shall stand in the judgement, and no accusation shall prevail against them, nor any be to condemn them, *Rom. 8. 33.*

5. There shall be an happy Sentence past upon them, adjudging of them to a Kingdome and Crown and Glory, *Mat. 25. 34. Come ye blessed, inherit the Kingdome:* and when this comes to pass, it shall make amends for all their sufferings and sorrows which here they underwent for Christ: when he shall declare them blessed, and bid them to come with him, and be where he is in his Kingdome, that prepared Kingdom, that Kingdom which is filled with all Glories, and all the World shall hear this Sentence pronounced, then shall they appear to be happy men, whiles those standing on the Left hand, are tremblingly waiting to hear a contrary doom.

6. They shall have that honour conferred upon them to be assessors with Christ, and to judge the World, *1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World?* after what manner this shall be, is not for us to determine; Christ is the great Judge: their lives, when they

were upon Earth, did condemn a sinful Generation, *Heb. 11. 7.* and these may be alledged there : and they shall certainly assent to, and acquiesce and rejoyce in the righteous Judgment which Christ shall pass upon his Enemies ; and shall in a royal equipage sit and attend, as so many Judges, until that great affair shall be finished.

7. When the great work of the last Judgment is over, they shall all return with Christ to Heaven : when that great Court shall break up, the Judge (with his retinue) shall go again to his own place, where they shall appear happy indeed : now shall the ungodly World see these Darlings of Christ, and beloved of his Father, to be carried away into everlasting joyes, to be taken nearer to Christ than Angels themselves ; who shall no sooner be gone, but they shall leave the other in endless Torments with Devils and damned Spirits ; where, when they come home to their Kingdom, and every child of God is placed upon his own Throne, and the Man Christ himself,) having resigned up his Mediatorial Kingdom into the hands of his Father) shall solace himself with theirs, and them with his company for ever, recreating and sporting themselves each in the other ; when Eternity shall be filled with fresh joyes and delights, new and ravishing continually ; when they shall ever be with the Lord, and there shall be no tediousness

ness in those perfect pleasures, but the Soul shall be alwayes satisfied in them: now shall it appear what it is to be a Son of God. But what are those happy entertainments of that place, none but one that hath been in the third Heaven can know; and did he know, he could not utter, or if he could utter, we could not conceive nor credit: but such things there shall be, and then they shall be known fully to them that enjoy them, and to the wicked they shall appear sufficiently for their conviction and confusion.

3. Why this discovery is reserved till then?

Ans. The timing of all divine dispensations depends on the Sovereign good pleasure of God; but yet there seem to beivers good reasons why this making of them to appear should be allotted to that time.

1. It is the time when Christ himself is to appear; and it is fit that the redeemed should wait for the discovery of their glory, till he that redeemed them cometh in his: besides, their appearing depends upon his: till the World be made to know that he is both Lord and Christ, they cannot acknowledge that Believers in him are the Children of God and Heirs of Glory: and if Christ be willing to tarry till then for his manifestation, his People then have no reason to murmur, or to think the time of their clearing long.

2. There are many Elect who are chosen to

be Sons, that must be brought in, and suffer many things for Christ in fulfilling their testimony, and there will be till that time a gathering in of such, and it is the holy pleasure of God that they that are gone before should wait, that there may be a full and universal discovery made of them all at once, *Rev. 6.9, 10, 11.* if they should appear sooner, the World would be afraid to do to them as is appointed. ●

3. The Day of Judgement is the fittest time for this : it is a day appointed for the setting of things to rights, to clear up all false Judgements and Mistakes which there were here : it is a Day wherein the presence of all the Creation shall be to look on, Heaven and Hell being for the while emptied of all their Inhabitants to come to this meeting and general Assembly; so that it will be the greatest Glory, and most pompous appearance, when a Child of God on such a day, and in such a presence, shall be openly owned and rewarded ; when he shall be set to view in all his glorious state, and the proclamation shall be audibly heard from one end of Heaven to another ; saying, *Behold a Son of God, and so shall it be done to one whom the King of glory delights to honour.*

VSE 1. For Information; learn we hence,

1. That this Truth may satisfie us in the great reason why the People of God are not now known, nor esteemed by the World ; it is be-
cause

cause the time of their manifestation is not yet come: we are often ready to think in our selves, if we are his Children, why doth he suffer us so little to be taken notice of, and so much condemned? and are hence prone to judge and censure his Providence in this respect: whereas it is his Wisdom and good pleasure that it should be so: Christ had his mean and obscure state upon Earth, and so must his followers: if we would be like him in glory, we must be conformable to him in obscurity: God hath his appointed seasons; Men do not as yet know God nor Christ, how then should they know his Children? but they shall know him, they shall see him and be astonished at him; and they shall see and know his People, and it is our duty to think Gods time the best.

2. How miserably mistaken shall the Saints Persecutors ere long find themselves to have been, about the Children of God, whom they persecuted? they think if they can but get the People of God under ground, if they can but see an end of them in this World, there is then an end for ever, and now they can triumph over them, and promise themselves henceforward never to be troubled with them any more; they have their wills and hearts desires, and are apt to boast over them, and say, where are now your great confidences, your faith, your hope? what is become of all your Prayers, and resolute

patient sufferings in expectation of a desired end? methinks, I see what blushing, what confusion of face, what dismal consternation these poor cheated wretches are filled withal, when, as soon as they look out of their Graves in the morning of the Resurrection, one of the first sights that accosts them is, those very Saints whom they oppressed, persecuted, flew, and hoped they had perished for ever, appearing before them in highest state and glory, shining in robes of Majesty, and blessed in the company of Jesus, coming to see the fearful judgement executed upon their proud Enemies: and it will be no little aggravation of their misery, to see those whom they despised, contemned and hated, made thus happy, when they themselves are for ever miserable, and when that shall be verified concerning them, *Psal. 49. 14. The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning*: then shall they confess, how foolish they had been so to despise and abuse those honourable and precious ones.

3. The Children of God ought not to value themselves according to what they are at present but what they shall be at Christs appearing. If the present visible condition of the Saints were the only rule of judging themselves by, they might reckon themselves among the most unhappy of mankind; and hence when their judgements have been byassed that way, and they

have

have looked with a carnal eye upon themselves; which is bounded on things present, they have been ready to be envious at the wicked and foolish men: but if they could ever keep an eye firmly fixt upon the day of revelation, and contemplate what is providing for them against that day; could they but fetch up the evidence of those unseen things, and feed their hearts with such thoughts, they would soon turn their envy into scorn, at least pity; and confess their former thoughts to have been ignorant, foolish, brutish.

USE. II. For Exhortation to the Children of God: the great Lesson which the Doctrine teacheth you is to live by Faith. All a Believers Consolation is laid up in the promise, and must be thence extracted by Faith: when *Paul* would strengthen the hearts of his *Corinthians*, with the thoughts of their future Glory, he inserts this necessary parenthesis, *2 Cor. 5: 7. For we live by Faith, not by sight.* The Saints Life of Glory is an hidden Life at present, *Col. 3. 3. Your Life is hid with Christ in God.* It is hid from the sight of the World, and hid from their own sense, but Faith is the evidence of things not seen, Faith must carry us as far as the great judgement, that day of Christs appearance, and thence we must gather our comforts, and present supports: and there are three things especially unto which we should exercise our Faith upon

upon this consideration. *Viz.*

1, To a patient bearing of all the afflictions and troubles of the present time: troubles and afflictions are unwelcome Guests to the mind of Man, nature is averse to them, and if grace doth not afford something to sweeten them, they will be hard to bear: and there cannot be a greater cordial against these Faintings, then a due application of the consideration of that happy day wherein the glory of the Children of God shall be made manifest; this hope will put life into the Soul, *Rom.8.24. For we live by hope*: the thoughts of this day were those which did put courage into Christians in their greatest adversities, and made them valiant in suffering for God and Christ, yea to contemn and despise those sufferings, and speak of them as poor things, and scarce to be valued: see what Paul thinks of them, *Rom.8.18. Not worthy to be compared with the Glory to be revealed*, and *2Cor.4.17. Our light affliction which is but for a moment. How David contents himself in such a meditation, Psal.17. ult. I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness.* And *Asaph, Psal,73.24. when a Child of God sits down and thinks with himself thus, I that now suffer for Christ, shall Reign with him ere long; I that now am judged and condemned by the World, shall shortly at Christs Bar be approved and acquitted; that for which now shame and reproach is cast upon*

upon me, shall then be my glory : what though I am now in heaviness, through manifold temptations, am despised, disgraced, trampled upon, and made a mock and laughter for a wicked World ? when Christ shall appear, then I shall be honoured, approved, arrayed in state, and crowned with Glory ; and they that now despise me shall see it ; they that will not now believe, shall then know that my reward was with God : how can he chuse but find his heart quieted, and the tumults thereof appeased with such thoughts as these ? yea quietly to suffer all things for Christ, in these hopes of Glory ?

2. To a chearful willingness to tarry and wait till Christ shall appear for the manifestation of our happiness : be we content to live obscurely, and die obscurely, and be forgotten for a while : this should satisfie our mind : when we are ready to think it long, to remember and consider, that Christ defers our appearance no longer than he doth his own ; that as soon as he shall appear we shall appear with him : and is it not enough that the Disciple be as his Master ? nay, will it not be the best time for us to appear with him ? he is the Lord of Glory, and when he comes he brings his reward with him : and withal remember it is but a short time, yet a little while and he will come, and he will not tarry ; and further satisfie your selves with this, that your Brethren must appear with you, even the whole

whole number of the redeemed, some whereof are yet unborn, and you have reason to wait for them: Finally ponder, that great shews require great preparations: Christ is now about the business, he is not idle, but making all ready for his coming: and he that believeth, maketh no haste.

3. To love his appearing, and to look for it. It is true, Christs appearing will be dreadful to the wicked, who are his Enemies; for he comes to judge the World in righteousness; and give recompence unto every man according to his doings; hence they may well cry to the rocks to fall on them, and hills to cover them, that they may not see his angry countenance, nor feel the weight of his revenging hand; but to the Saints it should be lovely. It is indeed a solemn and serious thing for any to think, I must stand before the dreadful Tribunal, and be tried for my eternal estate before him who is a most righteous Judge, who searcheth the heart, and cannot be deceived; where I must receive my final Sentence, which will be irreversible; and if I then be found to have put a cheat upon my own Soul, I must perish for ever: but to him that is a Child of God, and hath received the spirit of Adoption, there cannot be a more comforting thought than this: Hence the Apostle propounds it to his *Thessalonians*, as a great Topick, from whence to comfort one another.

I Thess.

1 *Thess.* 4, *ult.* That which would make a *Felix* tremble, should make a Saint leap for joy: to think ere long the last Trumpet will be sounded by the Arch-Angel, Jesus Christ will come from Heaven attended with a royal Guard of Angels, the dead small and great will arise, the Thrones will be set, the Books opened: this is the day which I have loved and longed for; now shall I appear such as the love of God in Christ hath made me to be; now shall mine Enemies see and be ashamed, gnash their teeth and melt away; now they shall know that I had a God and a Saviour, and an hope that makes not ashamed: this second coming of Christ shall be to my Salvation: if he do not appear I shall never appear: And hence, when we hear him saying, *Behold I come quickly*, let not us be affrighted but ravished, and utter that expression of Faith and Joy, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.*

We shall be like him.

It follows now that we consider the general nature of the happiness of the Sons of God, or the discovery which we have of it in this life, *We shall be like him*: There is enough revealed about our future estate to relieve our Faith, though not to satisfy our curiosity: our Apostle would not have Believers to be discouraged, because they have not a full discovery of what they

they shall be in another World, but to rest content with this general discovery which is made; and though they cannot measure it in all its dimensions, yet to take up with this thought, as having plentiful consolation in it. The Words indeed are but few, but they are full; and though our glory be shadowed to us by another, which is equally obscure and unknown to us as our own, yet from this very darkness there reflects abundant Light of comfort: and be it so that we know nothing at all distinctly of the Glory which Christ is now possessed of, yet there is consolation enough to be pickt out of this very consideration, *that we shall be like him.*

The Words set forth the after state of felicity which the Saints or Children of God shall attain unto, by a similitude or pattern, where we have;

1. The pattern it self, *Him*, who this is, is not particularly exprest; there being (as I formerly noted) an *Ellypsis* in the Words: some refer it to God, mentioned in the beginning of the verse whose Sons we are said to be, and it is proper for the Sons to be like the Father: others, and more appositely, apply it to Christ; for it is he that shall appear in glory, and *Paul* applies it to him in the forementioned parallel place, *Col. 3. 4.* and this is certain, that the Glory to which the Man Christ is exalted, is the proto type of that Glory to which the Saints are appointed, *Joh. 17. 22.*

The Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.

2. The resemblance which the Children of God shall have to his Glory: *we shall be like him*: among such comparates between which there is a consentanety, there is a double reference: For, some things agree in quantity, others in quality: between things agreeing in quantity there is a parity or equality, one is neither bigger nor less than the other; and this is not here to be understood: out of doubt the Man Christ shall enjoy a degree of Glory above all his Saints; this Head of the Church shall wear a Crown more weighty than any of his Members; this Son of righteousness (as he is called) shall shine with more orient brightness than those fixed Stars; this first born among many brethren, shall have a double portion of Glory in that Glorious Inheritance; but then, between things agreeing in quality, there is a similitude, which is consistent with imparity; things may be unequal, and yet not unlike: lesser things may agree with greater by way of similitude, though they differ in proportion: so the Poet, *Parvaq; cum magnis componere saepe solebam.* For this consists in a near resemblance there is of qualities between one and another, and this is it our Apostle here points at.

Hence,

Doct.

Doct. It is a soul-satisfying thought to the Children of God in their present, low and despised condition, to consider that in the day of Christs glorious appearance they shall be like him.

This is the comfort which *John* applies to them now, when the World hates them, and they walk under a disguise, and what their after estate shall be, neither appears to themselves, nor to the World; yet he would have them take up with this, and rest contented, yea delighted in the meditation of it. It is, *q. d.* let not your thoughts trouble you, be not over solicitously inquisitive after the secrets of God, and the particularities of your state and glory; but take this for a repast, and let it stay your stomachs till you come to sit down at the great Feast, you shall be like him.

In the Explication of this Position. we have to consider; 1. Wherein this likeness unto Christ consists? 2. How it appears that we shall then be like him? 3. What ground of satisfaction ariseth from hence?

1. Wherein this likeness consists?

Ans. 1. There is an incommunicable Glory which Christ as God possesseth, who is God blessed for evermore: He is one in essence with his Father, He is full possessor of all the Divine Attributes and Perfections; He is the Object of

Divine

of Divine adoration, and all the Angels of God do worship him. In this Glory we ought not to expect to be like him; it would be vain presumption and highest Arrogancy in any of the Children of Men to feed themselves with any such expectation.

2. There is a Relative incommunicable Glory which the humane Nature of Christ by virtue of personal union with the Son of God is advanced unto, in consideration of which Union the Man Christ is truly God, or a Divine Person; and in this we shall not be like him; there is indeed a Mystical and Spiritual Union between Christ and Believers whereby they are one, he being the Political Head of the Body, the Church and ruling of it, not by Authority only, but by influence too, his Spirit being sent forth into their hearts: But this is of a far divers nature from that Union which is between the two natures in Christ. The People of God are not to expect to be as nearly related unto the Son of God, as his own particular humanity is.

3. There is, a communicable Glory which Christ in his humane nature, as he is the head of the Church, and their representative or surety, is advanced unto; wherem, though he personally hath the preheminance, as Col. 1. 18. *That in all things he might have the preheminance.* Yet all his Children do share in a Glorious *Communitate*

similitude; and, though not in like measure yet in like manner they are sharers with him. It is not to be expected that I should give a full account of this, what it is, for if so, then it would appear what we shall be, which our Apostle denies; but through the Glass of the Scripture we may make a dark discovery of it; and there are two things in which this likeness to Christ doth consist. 1. That state of perfection which the whole man shall be advanced unto. 2. The additional Glory which shall be conferred on them in that state.

1. That state of perfection which the whole Man shall be advanced unto: We labour under manifold imperfections in this life, such as make our present happiness full of infelicity: there can be no perfect glory without a perfect state; such as Christ enjoyeth in our nature in Heaven, such also shall all the Children of God be made to possess in the Kingdom; in summe they shall be like him, both in the state of Body and Soul.

1. Their bodily estate shall be like his: The Paul plainly asserts, *Phil. 3. 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious Body.* The Disciples had a glimpse of his bodily glory in the Transfiguration, *Mat. 17. 1. begin.* And, though this be the least, yet it is no contemptible part of our likeness to Christ, that when the Body, being raised or changed, shall leave

leave behind it all those imperfections, which it lay down under, or was visited withal here : When it shall be cloathed with Beauty in the room of deformity ; when it shall shake off all sickness and pain, and enjoy perfect health and strength, when this Mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruptibility ; when it shall be sick no more, and dye no more, when it shall need Food and Raiment no more ; when the Body shall be made perfectly holy, and filled with Angelical Vigour and Activity for God : When that shall come to pass, 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43.

2. Their Souls shall be made like his, and receive all those adornings of every grace in a degree of perfection suitable to the state of Glory. Paul gives us an intimation of such a thing, 1 Cor. 13, & 10, 12. When the understanding shall be enlarged to see the glorious truth in its Radiancy, and take in the light of it without dazzling, and be freed from all mistakes, or darkness for ever ; when the Will shall be unfettered and at full liberty to act with the highest content and fullest freedom upon the chiefest good ; when the affections shall be carried forth with the greatest ardour after God, and enjoying the object of their delight, cannot but be satisfied in it ; so it is with Jesus Christ, thus is his soul perfected in all its faculties.

3. The additional glory which shall be conferred

ferred upon them in this state: Herein also they shal be like him, for they shal be fellow-com-moners with him in this complemental Glory; they shal not be divided from him, but conjoyned in this felicity. They shal enjoy one and the same Heaven; that Kingdom which is prepared for him, is also prepared for them; as he hath a massie Crown of honour given him, so also shal they have each of them Crowns set upon their heads, even an eternal weight of glory, *Rev. 4. 4. They had on their heads Crowns of Gold.* As his Father hath seated him upon a Royal Throne, so also are their Thrones made ready for them, and they shal sit upon them there, *Rev. 3. 21. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me upon my Throne.* As he possesseth fulness of joyes in his Fathers presence, *Psal. 16. ult.* so shal they in his, *Psal. 36. 8.* But I do but lade the Ocean with a spoon; The one half of that Glory which Christ now enjoyeth is not told, nor can be understood by us, in the dark and cloudy Vale.

2. How it appears that we shal be like him?

Ans. This truth is of Divine revelation, and must fetch its evidence from Scripture-Testimony, which, as it asserts the truth of it, which is reason enough for our Faith, so it gives divers grounds for it, *viz.*

1. His taking part with them in their infirmities, that so they might be sharers with him in

his

his Glory, *Heb. 2. 14, 15.* He humbled himself; that he might exalt them; he made his Soul an offering for sin, that he might see his seed; he gave himself for them to that very end that he might make them thus glorious, *Eph. 5. 26, 27.* And hence, this glory is called a *purchased possession*, *Eph. 1. 14.*

2. The good will of God the Father to prepare this Glory for them, and appoint them to be the heirs of it: Hence it is called the *Kingdom prepared*, *Mat. 25. 34.* And with this our Saviour encourageth his Disciples, *Luk. 12. 32.* *Fear not little Flock, it is my Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Now they are chosen in Christ, and hence they are to be partakers with him in his Glory, *Eph. 1. 4. i. e.* Christ was to be the procurer of that good they were chosen to.

3. The near relation which they have to Jesus Christ: As he is a Son, so are they Sons, and he is not ashamed to call them his Brethren: And from their sonship, *Paul* argues their Co-heirship, *Rom. 8. 17.* *If Sons, then Heirs, Co-heirs with Christ.* They are the Spouse of Christ, hence called the Bride, the Lambs Wife, *Rev. 19. 7, 21, 9.* And it is the Wives prerogative to share in her Husbands Honour. They are the members of Christ, he is their head, now the whole man partakes in the honour which the head is adorned withal: they are Christ mystical, *1 Cor. 12. 12.* And therefore are not to be

divided from him in his Glory.

4. The Intercession of Christ: He is in Heaven interceding with his Father for this very thing: when Christ was ready to depart the World, as to his bodily presence, he gave us a specimen of this intercession of his in that mediatorial Prayer of his, *Job. 17*. In which he positively declares that this is one thing which he importunately and without taking of any denial pleads, *vers. 24*. *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.*

5. From the condition of the Covenant of Grace: For though there be nothing of merit in it, yet there is certainty, and a promise which cannot be made void: Now this is engaged to those that serve him, *Job. 12. 26*. *Where I am, there shall my servants be.* That follow him, *Mat. 19. 28*. *Ye that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon his Throne, ye shall sit upon Thrones.* That suffer with him, *2 Tim. 2. 12*. *If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.*

6. Finally, Union is the ground of Communion: Hence these, being made one with Christ by the same spirit dwelling in them which dwelt in him, so they come to be like him in Glory.

Hence,

Our Saviour Christ puts them together, *Job. 17. 21, 22, 23*. *That they may be one in us, &c.*
And

And the Glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, &c. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

3. What ground of satisfaction ariseth from hence?

Ans. In summe, if we shall be like Christ, there needs no more to make us fully blessed and conspicuously glorious: He cannot be ought less than unexpressibly happy in the great day of Christs appearance, that shall then be like him, for although we can at present no more know what Christ shall be, then we can what we shall be, yet the consideration that we shall be like him, may afford to us these grounds of satisfaction.

1. That our happiness shall countervail and more than make us amends, for all the sorrows and sufferings of this life. Christ was a Man of sorrows with an Emphasis, he ~~was~~ put to the greatest grief, and yet he hath a full compensation for all; his Exaltation holds a full proportion to his Humiliation, *Phil.* 2. 7, with 8, 9. He was deeply humbled, so was he highly exalted: Such was it that the very thoughts of it before hand carried him resolutely through all that he was to meet withal, *Heb.* 12. 2. *For the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross and despised the shame.* And if he hath enough to answer his, how then must the People of God needs have that which will dry up their tears, and wash off their

their griefs and troubles? Hence with this David comforts himself in midst of such thoughts as he had been labouring under, *Psal. 17. ult. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,*

2. That our happiness shall be so discovered that our Enemies, and those that scorned and scoffed at us here, shall be ashamed and confounded at the sight of it: It shal then appear not only to our selves, but to all the World too, that it was not, as they thought, in vain to serve God, and unprofitable to pray to him: Christ's second appearance shal fill his Enemies with horrid confusion, *Rev. 1. 7.* They scorned him here, and he was made a reproach, but then they shal tremble and dread, his glorious presence shal drive them to seek shelter from him, of Rocks and Mountains, *Rev. 6. 20, 21.* And when we shal appear with him in Glory, then they that said the Saints were unhappy men, shal see and confess that they are glorious; Then Men shal say, *Verily there is a reward for the Righteous, Verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth, Psal. 58. 11.* With this thought the Church in the greatest distress comforts herself, and checks the pride of her Enemies, *Mic. 7. 8, 9, 10.*

3. That our happiness shal be such as shal serve eminently to expresse the love of God to be like himself. Christ is the Son of his love, and God toifie that he loved him in our nature hath made

made him accordingly glorious: He hath also loved his People in Christ, hence they too must be made to know what that love meaneth: That love with which he loves them is special love, and not common which all his Creatures are made the partakers of, and hence the fruits of it must be special too: It shal be such a Glory, as shal deserve to have a Proclamation made before it, and Angels and Men called to turn their eyes and look upon it, to see what were the everlasting thoughts of good will which God did bear to his chosen Ones in Christ.

4. What can the Disciple desire better than to be as his Master? As he cannot expect to meet with any thing better here, so he can hope for no better hereafter: To be with Christ where he is, and to be like him in the day of his appearance, is as much as the Soul can desire, and will be found a felicity so great, that his most enlarged reaching will not be able to grasp after more.

USE, I. For Information.

1. That the thoughts of the great Day of Judgement ought to be delightful thoughts to the People of God; for this is the very day wherein being made like to him, they shal look like themselves: This thought that then we shal be like him, may make the expectation of it very precious to us: There are many terrible considerations of that day, awful and amazing, which may

may well make the ungodly World to fall a trembling ; but the consideration of what they shal be then, may take off all that dread from the hearts of the Children of God : It is the very day wherein Christ comes with great Power and Majesty, and all his Saints shal wait upon him in like Robes of Glory unto them which he shal be adorned withal : Could we but think of these things with a true discerning of our right and title to them, it could not but make us love to be meditating before-hand of that glorious time : *Paul* loves often to be speaking of it.

2. Learn hence wherein true happiness consists, *viz.* To be like Christ : The World hath greatly mistaken in its ghuess at the nature of true felicity ; whiles some have placed it in pleasures, others in profits, others in honours : Some have called the Proud happy, others the Voluptuous happy ; whereas that which is the true happiness, namely likeness to Christ they have reckoned upon as the greatest felicity : But this discovers their mistake ; for, if it be so that when we shal attain the highest pitch of created felicity, our happiness will receive its denomination from hence.

VIZ.

That we shal be like Christ ; then certainly the more any are like Christ in this World, the more of true happiness they now possess. It is true,

true, conformity to Christ in this evil World, procures Men hatred and persecution, and that makes Men (who Judge according to outward appearance) vote them miserable; but still, their inward unseen Glory which proceeds from their consimilitude to Jesus Christ is a preponderating blessedness; and as it is it self a Man's good estate, so also it derives those solid joyes to the Soul of him that is so, that render it full of unspeakable Glory in the midst of the greatest outward oppression; because, whiles they are thus hated and persecuted for their conformity unto Jesus Christ, *The Spirit of God and of Glory rests upon them*, 1 Pet. 4. 14. Begun happiness is founded on holiness here, and perfected holiness shall be found to be true happiness in the Kingdom.

U'S E, II. For Exhortation to the Children of God: Shal we be like unto Christ at his appearance, and is this consideration so full of Satisfaction.

Then,

1. Be we exhorted to labour in preparing for that Day, that so we may then be like him. There is a work to be done by the People of God in this life, in order to their glorious likeness to Christ in that other: And our Apostle tells us what endeavours the hopes of it will excite in those that are possessed of them, in the *verse* following my Text: He that hath this hope, purifieth

eth himself as he is pure : It is, *q. d.* they that expect to be like Christ then, will use means to be like him now : Holiness is the way to happiness, *Heb. 12. 14.* Christ first sanctifieth his Church before he glorifieth it, *Eph. 5. 26, 26.* And we must labour in this Work, to get sin mortified; *Paul* having put his *Colossions* in mind of that Glory which they shal have at Christ's appearance, takes argument from thence to press this duty, *Col. 3. 4, 5.* They that look for such a change hereafter, are under strong ties to an heavenly conversation here, *Phil. 3. 20, 21.* *Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we look for Christ, &c.* And a like advice the Apostle *Peter* gives to them he writes unto, *2 Pet. 3. 14.* *Seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that you may be found in him in Peace, without spot and blemish.* We should therefore lament that we are so much unlike him now; and pray to God for his Spirit to dwell powerfully in us, and to lead us effectually in his way, to purge our hearts from all impurity, and fill them with holiness.

2. Labour we to draw consolation and establishment to our Souls from the forethoughts of this great benefit : there are many troubles and discouragements which the Children of God meet with all here in this life, and their hearts are often born down therewithal; but if we did but truly ponder, and well digest this consideration

tion of that glorious condition which we shal be put into at that great Day, it would lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees ; it would make us patient in tribulation, quiet under all the affronts and disgraces that are put upon us ; willing to wait ; and in the mean while not weary of well doing : could we but know in its dimensions what it is to be like Christ, what an admirable felicity it must needs be to be assimilated to him in that Day, it would set us down with *Paul's* perswasion, *Rom. 8. 18. That the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us.* Yea, the very ghessees and conjectures which we may make of it affords matter of solid joy and triumph to the Children of God.

Pray therefore earnestly to God for this Divine illumination ; pray *Paul's* Prayer, *Eph. 3. 16. to 20.* Oh ! How glorious will Christ appear when he comes to Judge the World ! when he shal come in the Glory of his Father, when he shal be attended with an innumerable company of Angels, and in great Majesty sit down upon a Throne of Judgement ! when Holiness shal be to him for a Robe, and Righteous for a Garment ! Then to be like Christ, holy as he is holy, adorned with his Robes, Resplendent with his Glory, sitting down upon Thrones with him, and with him Judging the World ;
when

when he shal declare us Heirs of his Kingdome, Children of his Father, and make us sharers with him in the purchased Possession, and it shal be known that he took possession of all that Glory, not for himself alone, but in the name of all those who had believed in him, then it shal be known that it was not a vain thing to serve him, and to suffer with and for him; then shal our happiness be full, perfect, eternal, when we shal by plentiful experience know, that to be like him, is to be everlastingly blessed in the full fruition of the most glorious God to all eternity.

For we shall see him as he is.

These words are an argument which the Apostle brings by way of evidence to make good his former assertion, or prove that we shal be like him; under which is contained another great truth concerning the happiness of the Children of God in another World. As for the force of the Argument, very briefly: It may at first blush seem to argue weakly, at least obscurely, to prove our likeness to him, from our vision of him; Devils and wicked Men shal see him, as *Rev. 1. 7.* but they will not thence be more like him: I answer, it is true, these shal see a great deal of his Glory, they shal see him coming as their Judge, but they shal not see him as

their Saviour, as the Saints shal: Again, they shal see him with great horror, and fly from his presence, as *Adam* did in the Garden, and as they shal do, *Rev.* 6. 20, 21. Whereas the Children of God shal see him with great content and satisfaction. Some thinks that *John* argues from the cause, supposing that this Vision will be a transforming Vision, changing us into the Image or likeness of Christ perfectly: others suppose him to argue from the part to the whole; the Doctrine of the Beatifical vision being a received Doctrine in the Church, as being the perfect felicity of the understanding.

Hence,

He argues for our whole perfection, for if in one part of faculty we shal be perfected, by consequence all our whole man shal be rendred perfect, for it is an whole blessedness that we shal have, and that consists in perfect conformity to Christ. But that which seems best to clear the argument, is to look upon him as arguing from the effect or consequent. *Paul* tells us that without Holiness no Man shal see God, *Heb.* 12. 14. Now Holiness consists in a conformity to Christ.

And hence,

If we shal have such a sight of him, it inferrs that we are made like to him: If we were not rendred holy, and spiritual, and that perfectly, we then should never thus see him.

But

But bearing the argument, only with this admonition, to warn us that we deceive not our selves, thinking to see Christ hereafter with joy, and yet abhorring conformity to him in holiness, which will be found a piece of undoing presumption at the last. I come to the Words, as they are an assertion, or point of Doctrine; and here also they have their difficulty: Who this [Him] is we have already heard, *viz.* Jesus Christ, though some interpret it of God, but it intends Jesus Christ God-man; it is he who is to appear, and he whom we shal be made like unto when he shal appear. Hence,

Doct. It will be a great part of the happiness of the Children of God, in the other life, that they shall see Jesus Christ as he is.

Our Doctrine treats of the Beatifical Vision, which, as whiles we are in this body we are incapable of enjoying, so are we no less incapable of knowing what it is. Many curious wits have beat their brains, and tentered their inventions about it, to no purpose, but to darken counsel with words without knowledge. The School-Men have taken a great deal of pains in it and all but to shew their ignorance: Interpreters generally agree that the expression of *John's* is synonymous to that of *Paul's*, of seeing him face to face, 1 Cor. 13. 12. Where there is also

an *Elypsis* of the Object as well as in our Text : It is sometime called a seeing of God, and is promised, *Mat.* 5. 8. Sometimes a seeing of Christ, who is God, *Rev.* 21. 4. *Jeb.* 19. 26. There is a seeing of God here in this life, and there is a sight which shal be had of him in Glory : For happines is here inchoated, it shal there be perfected : Now the great matter of inquiry is about the difference which is between these two Sights : The Apostle, in *1 Cor.* 13. 12. makes a very great difference, and so indeed there is beyond our present imagination ; but in what things it lyes is hard to tell, the words are (like our present knowledge) *Ænigmatical*, a Riddle not easily read, and *Augustines* counsel is here good, *That we beware lest whiles we quarrel about the way of seeing God, we forget and miss of Sanctification, by which only he is to be seen.*

Briefly then,

It is the concurrent Judgement of the Orthodox, that the object seen then and now is the same, and that the difference consists in two things.

First, The Manner.

Secondly, The Degrees, both of which are intimated in the forecited Text.

1. The Manner : That now is *through a Glass* darkly, that then is, *face to face* : i. e. We now see him mediately, whereas we shal then see him immediately ; now we have a reflex, then we shal

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have

have a direct sight of him. Now there are some who think he is here seen by the reflexion of the of his Attributes, and then in his naked Essence, and so make the Attributes a part of the Glass; but this is a flight too high for me to soar unto. It is certain the Attributes are no part of the Glass, but they are the Object that is now reflected in the Glass. I know that seeing Christ as he is, intends more than a seeing ~~the~~ Man Christ in his visible Glory, but it doth not therefore necessarily enforce the seeing the Divine Essence. Seeing him face to face, is some transcendent manner of seeing him; and what if it be but good pleasure that we shall not know it till we come actually to see it? We cannot further understand how there should be, nor believe that there is any proportion between an infinite object and a finite created understanding: Should God make a Being able to know him in his naked Essence, he must make one equal to himself. Angels are Comprehensors, yet they are represented as covering their faces with two of their wings, and that not only by reason of modesty, but of weakness too, lest they should lose their sight in the contemplation. The highest flight of our understanding, is to see things in their causes, but the Divine Essence is without cause. That distinction of seeing comprehensively, and seeing apprehensively hath here no place; in things that have parts, and are divisible, and so

may

may partially come into our view it will hold, but the Divine Essence is simple and indivisible, and therefore to apprehend and comprehend it are all one. Nor is the ground of Opposition between Faith and Sight with respect to the object seen, for we heard that is one and the same, but to the manner of seeing him; and it may rather argue the contrary, namely, if it be God in his Attributes that is believed in now, it must be God in his Attributes that must be seen then; Christ saith, *be it to thee according to thy Faith*. We now believe that God is Infinite, Eternal, &c. we shall see and apprehend him to be so, and as for that notion of the desire of partially reaching to see the God-head naturally, and hence, that it cannot be happy without such a sight, it will easily be found a mistake; for besides that the desires of fallen man grasp after that which if obtained would certainly prove their misery, we may argue here diametrically opposite, *viz.* That which can make a man fully happy can answer all his desires; He that knows God to be his God in Christ, and knows him to be infinitely wise, powerful, good glorious, &c. knows enough to satisfy him in his object: but besides this, he can know no more and live, *Exod. 33.20. There shall no man see me and live.* I know many Interpreters limit this to our present state in this life, but God doth not so do, nor is there any need to

do it. See also 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Who dwelleth in the light which none can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see: Joh. 1. 18. No man hath seen God at any time.*

There are several Glasses which here represent God unto us; as the Glas of Creation, and the Glas of Providence, in which his Being, and his Wisdom, Power and Goodness do shine forth: there is the Glas of the Scriptures, the Law and Gospel; the Glas of Ordinances, Preaching, and the Sacraments, in which God and Christ are exhibited to our Faith; but our manner of seeing him through all these is darkly, and is rather compared to a report of hearing of the ear, than an ocular demonstration; these things bring us the happy news of ~~God~~ ^{him} in one; and are the means whereby we that have not seen yet do believe: as 1 Pet. 1. 8. This Glas is not a Prospective Glas, which represents things near and plain, and the things themselves, but it is a Looking Glas, which reflects only the rayes and representations of things, and when they have shown us all they can, we must now conclude with him, Job 26. 14. *How little a portion is heard of him?* but when that day comes we shall then see God in the face of Christ; the Glas will be no more needed, because Christ himself will then be our light: Christ is not only a Mediator of Reconciliation, and Intercession, but also of Illumination: and as he doth it now
by

by his Spirit in the means, so then he will do it immediately: we read of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. 21. 22, 23. I saw no Temple therein, and the City had no need of the Sun, &c. for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* And Chap, 22. 5. *They need no Candle, nor the light of the Sun, for the Lord giveth them Light.* These things are Allegorical, and refer not to the Church Militant, but Triumphant, and express the nearness we shall there be in unto Christ, and those irradiations which we shall receive from him, with one Temple, Ordinances, Ministry.

2. The Degree or Measure; the Apostle saith, *Now I know in part, then I shall know even as I am known:* i.e. he shall have a better acquaintance with, and a more distinct and perfect view of the Object: the things which we now rather believe than understand, we shall then have a satisfactory discovery of them; all Objections shall be answered, and Doubts cleared: our Knowledge now is most what negative, it shall then be more positive; we rather see him now as he is not, but then as he is: there is not only at the present a veil upon the Glass we see in, but there are also thick scales upon our eyes; these shall be taken off, as well as the veil removed: the very eyes of our Faith are here sore and tender, but then our sight shall be strong and piercing. Then,

1. God shall appear discernably in his glorious Attributes and Perfections; and what we have here believed of him, we shall then find to be true concerning him: God will so reveal himself to the Soul as is to us at present unconceivable; it shall then read his perfection of Wisdom, and excellency of Holiness, see him clothed with Power and Majesty, know his greatness and goodness, and see how all these perfections are not divers but one in God: God will communicate himself fully to the understanding, to the utmost of its capacity of receiving; he shall discern the orient brightness and splendour of the great Jehovah, as far as a created intellectual eye can receive without being destroyed; as much as shall make it happy; he shall then upon knowledge be fully satisfied that God is all and more than all that ever he heard of him.

2. They shall see into the mystery of the Trinity: Faith now receives it, and that which is in Faith now, shall then be in sight, 2 Cor. 5. 7. One God in three persons without division, and three persons in one God without confusion, is a sight too high for our reason now; this light is truly dazling, and our eyes cannot keep open to it; but then we shall be able to gaze upon so great a light, and contemplate it with satisfaction; we shall no more need borrowed expressions or dark similitudes; our Communion

is now, and shall be much more there with all three: 2 *Cor.* 13. 14. 1 *Joh.* 1. 4. we now give credit to it because God in Scripture testifies it, we shall then so know it as to be able to say certainly it is so, without any longer doubting how it is.

3. They shall be thoroughly acquainted with the Incarnation, and Hypostatical Union of the two natures in the Son of God, *Joh.* 14. 20. *At that day you shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.* This for the present is a great mystery, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. and his Name is on this account called Wonderful, *Isai.* 9. 6. the clearest understanding on Earth grows giddy at the consideration of it, to think how two natures so divers should dwell in one person, how the eternal God should Tabernacle in an house of clay, the Word be made Flesh, an humane nature should be fitted to dwell in the same person with the Son of God, that God himself should be seen eating and drinking with Men: but then we shall be able to resolve our selves how there can be two natures and not two persons, how the Son of *Mary* was grafted into the eternal Stock of the Son of God, how the second person alone could assume notwithstanding there is but one God undivided in Essence; these are things familiar to a glorified Soul, and he hath no difficulty or doubt about them.

4. They shall know the power and vertue of
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the Redemption wrought out by Christ ; they shall know the worth and value of a Saviour : Paul desired to know it here, *Phil. 3. 10. That I may know him, &c.* now he hath this desire satisfied ; the reason why now we love him no more, is because we know no more of his worth, *Isai. 53. 2, 3.* then we shall know his unparallel'd value : a Believer yet doth know a great deal of it now ; and hence he is precious to him, *1 Pet. 2. 7. To you that believe he is precious :* pardon of sin, peace of Conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and Grace to serve him, are fruits of it ; but alas, these are but glimpses ; a glorified soul looks upon the excellency of Heaven itself, and the Crown of Glory, and all the joys of which it is possessed, yea upon Hell and its torments, from whence he finds himself delivered ; and in these he sees the value and vertue of his precious blood ; we shall have other manner of thoughts of a Redeemer there, then those that entertain us now ; when we find that through him justice is satisfied, our persons are justified and adopted, our natures sanctified, and we our selves are glorified, being freed from Hells torments, and possessed of eternal Glory : when we find our selves shining like the brightest Cherub in the Kingdome of God, when thousands and millions are in endless burnings, then shall we know him as he is.

5. They shall know the meaning and latitude

of

of the promises, as of all other Scriptures: here they complain how little they know of Gods mind in his word; there are such knots as their best skill cannot untie: it is but a childish knowledge we have of these Divine Riddles, hence all our discourses upon Theological truths are broken, imperfect Discourses: but then the perfect shall come, 1 Cor. 13. 9, 10. Alas for the sad complaints which some humbled Souls make of themselves, for their dulness and ignorance, they know so little of what concerns them so much, God and their own Souls Salvation; but then the Believer that knew least here, shall know infinitely more than Paul did when upon Earth, and particularly the precious promises which were here misunderstood, misinterpreted, and hence they were not so sweet and excellent to him, he shall then know their content, and what a vast unconceivable treasure of infinite and everlasting good was laid up in them; what God engaged when he promised to be his God, and his Portion; what Christ meant when he told his Disciples that he went to prepare a place for them; and then shall his experience tell him, that these Epithetes of *exceeding great and precious*, were deservedly put upon the promises of the Scripture: *sed manum de Tabula!* let Gods Children but tarry a while patiently, & you will need neither Man nor Angel to tell you what it is.

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Touching the evidence of the Doctrine, that this Vision is truly beatifical, or that thus to see Christ is a great part of the happiness of glorified Saints needs not many words to evince: happiness consists in the perfect closure of the faculty with the Object; God in Christ is the proper ultimate Object of all our faculties, and so of the understanding: when therefore the understanding is filled full of the knowledge of Christ it shall be blessed: happiness requires the full attainment of the Creatures end: Man as to his understanding was made for light or knowledge; hence Truth must glorifie the understanding, and when it is full of Christ, it is full of truth it self. Happiness consists in knowledge which none but a reasonable being is capable of: irrational Agents attain their ends, but they are not happy in so doing, because they are irrational: the satisfaction of the understanding must therefore be a main and principal part of happiness, because it is a faculty without which no Being can be conceived to be happy: needs then must the Children of God be very blessed in this Vision, when they come to see Christ as he is, for all necessary and desirable knowledge, whether speculative or practical shall be comprehended in it: and if *David* could account of a little glimmering light, a day-break faint beam of it, to be more worth than gold, *Psal.* 19, 10. what compleat satisfaction then must that full knowledge

ledge of him yield, when this Sun shall shine upon them in his noon-day brightness: if it be life eternal to know God and Christ as he is here known, *Job. 17. 3.* we cannot then conceive, much less, express what it shall be when a perfected understanding shall receive a perfect intimate and immediate irradiation of this Knowledge.

USE, I. For Information; Learn hence,

1. That a perfect and through knowledge of God in Christ is not to be expected by any in this life: this is a privilege reserved for glory, and not here looked for, much less presumed upon by any but such as are enfeebled: our Organs are not as yet accommodated to it, nor shall be, till the body of death be laid off: sin remaining in the understanding is so much darkness there: nor are our present means ordered to be the deferents of perfect light to us, but are Glasses fitted to our sore eyes, lest instead of helping them to see, they should put them out. Believers are not stark blind, their eyes are blessed because they do see, but they are imperfectly blessed for they see but confusedly, men like trees. *Paul*, as a Saint, knows but in part, and as an Apostle, or a glass to give light to others, prophesies but in part, *1 Cor. 13. 9.* the air through which the Sun of righteousness beams down his light upon us, is, though diaphenous, yet hazy and thick. There is indeed
 enough

enough revealed to direct us in our way, but not so much as to set us down satisfied : Hence the Ordinances, and all helps to the knowledge of God in Christ, will be of use to us as long as we are in this life : and though it should be a comfort to us to think that the time will shortly come when we shall no more need this Glass, when that Oracle shal be fulfilled, *Jer. 31. 34. They shall teach no more every man his Neighbour, for they shall all know me, &c.* Yet except we can be content here to live without any sight of Christ at all, we must not be weary of, nor throw aside the Glass as long as we are here. We must be glad that we may, and thankful that we do see the Sun in his beams, till we come to dwell in the Fountain of Light.

2. See here who they be that enjoy the most of Inchoate felicity in this World, *viz.* They that see most of God and Christ; if this vision when perfected, be so great a part of eternal Glory, the beginnings, and irradiations of it here must needs have a degree of blessedness in them. There is indeed a knowledge in this life, which is repleat with misery, and the encreasing of it is but the encrease of sorrow ; and indeed miserable objects cannot be expected to do any other than to reflect trouble on them that seek acquaintance with them : But could we acquaint our selves with Christ, see him in all, we should be able to pick up crumbs of felicity out of every thing :

thing : Be therefore much in this study and contemplation ; use all helps to get as near unto Christ as you can ; get acquainted with him and that shall give you quiet in trouble, satisfaction in all changes : And the way to get a sight of Christ, and fellowship with him, is to get amongst the Children of God, get to be such as truly fear him, it is to such that he makes himself known, *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with those that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* They are the most unhappy Souls that know not Jesus Christ ; every degree of distance from him is a further degree of infelicity : How ignorant then is the World that can content themselves to live estranged from him ? Destruction waits on them that are far from him.

U S E, II. For Exhortation to the Children of God, in two things.

1. Be preparing for this glorious sight. The Apostle mentions it as a great Privilege to be made meet for this glory, *Col. 1. 12.* And as it is of God to make us worthy through the worthiness of Christ, and to prepare us for it by the Sanctification of the Spirit ; so it concerns us to be making ready. It is your Marriage-day, in which your Bride-groom will shew himself to you in his glory, you therefore should be diligent in making ready to meet him : Would you then have a full and satisfying sight of Christ ; now turn away your eyes from beholding vanity : you must

must labour so to walk as that you may be accepted of him: What manner of persons should they be who look for such an happy sight as that? The more you love Christ now, the more grateful will the sight of him then be: Labour to make sure of your interest in him, to see him in all his Royalty, with an appropriating sight, and to be able to challenge a title to him as your Saviour, will be the very happiness of this happiness. Labour to be found in him, adorned with his Righteousness, filled with his Grace, and waiting for his Kingdome, and so in his light you see light.

Let this take off the terrour, and sweeten the thoughts of your dissolution. For, though the Apostle mentions this as a priviledge of the great day of Christ's appearance, yet it is an happiness that every dying Believer is immediately admitted unto in respect of his Soul: It is true, the bodily eyes shal see the Man Christ then, which will be a complement of our Glory; but this sight is mainly intellectual: and one would think it should comfort a Child of God in the darkest hour of death to think that as soon as his soul is enlarged from his body, he shal see the King in his glory, Christ as he is: This made *Paul* be so desirous to depart, *Phil. 1. 23. To be with Christ which is best.* What can you see here that is so desirous as to hold your eyes and make you loth to look off and leave it to see Christ?

Christ? I am sure here are many sorrowful sights to be seen, here you may see abundance of sin committed, God's Name greatly dishonoured; you may see the pride and insolence of the World, and oppression and groans of the godly; in summe, the most that you see here is vanity, madness and folly; these are undesirable sights, and how oft doth your eye affect your heart in seeing of them, and fill you with grief and sorrow? The best and only happy sight that ever you had here, is to behold God's beauty in his Temple, to see Christ in an Ordinance, and to solace your Souls in fellowship with him, *Psal. 27. 4. 63. 2.* And if ever you have been ravished with this, it may then tell you how transporting it must needs be, to see God in his Palace; Christ at the right hand of the heavenly Majesty, and me thinks this very thought should bring you to *Paul's Conclusion, 2 Cor. 5. 8. We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.*

USE, III. For Consolation to the Children of God in respect of theirs that are departed. Let not your hearts be troubled, mourn not as they that have no hope: Oh, the happy exchange that they have made from seeing you to see Christ as he is: Not whose Angels do for them, but who do themselves stand in the presence of the Father. Might an Apostrophe be here admitted, I would be so farr from bewailing

ing

ing their hard fate, that I would congratulate their great felicity, and say, Thrice happy soul that have received a blessed discharge from all the vain sights, and soul-disquieting objects of a miserable World, to see and behold him that bought and saved you. Whiles we are here groping in the dark, and looking with purblind eyes, upon imperfect looking glasses, and are faine to take up with transient glances, and shaded representations, you dwell at the Well-head of light: while we can scarce see enough to establish our faith and confirm our hope, you are gazing upon himselfe into extasies, and drinking your fill of his fountain light, beholding his face in person, as he is, knowing him as you know him, while we have our sight of him obscured by some cloud of error or unbelief: you are gotten above clouds and fogs, your sinners feet are upon you, but you are refresht with everlasting beams, of purest light from the face of Jesus Christ. We dare not envy, we would not call you back from that felicity, who our selves also are waiting for that happy time, and our only comfort and support under all the sins and sufferings of this present life, ariseth from the hope of ere long enjoying that which you are at the present possessed of. Live happy in seeing of him in whose presence is fulness of joy: & whiles you are living in full fruition, it shal be our endeavour to live in this hope, that *when he shall appear we shal be like him, because we shall see him as he is.*

F I N I S.

The Righteous Man's

DEATH

A Prefage of evil aproaching :

A SERMON

Occasioned by the Death of

Major Thomas Savage Esq.

Preached

By *Samuel Willard* Teacher of
in *Boston, M.E.*

*Iſa. 57. 1. The Righteous is taken away from the
evil to come.*

BOSTON in NEW-ENGLAND,
Printed by *Samuel Green*, 1684.

Solomon

Hadarah

Present

Walking

15457:1 The King

is taken away from the
evil to come

Black Lash

The Righteous Man's Death a Presage
of evil approaching.

Isa. 57. 1.

*The Righteous is taken away from the world
and come.*

THese Words are one part of the
Prophet's mournful lamentation
at the Godly Man's Funerals; and may pos-
sibly look back to the death of good
Hezekiah, that pious Prince, which fell out not
long before, whose removal was introductive to
the sad and miserable condition unto which the
Jewish Nation was soon after reduced. The
Text, with the Context, so far as is contained in
the two first Verses of the Chapter, doth repre-
sent to us,
The common lot wherein the best of Men
do share with others: *Righteous and Merciful
Dye, yea Perish; i. e.* (as some interpret it)
they may be taken away, not only by a natural,
but also by a violent death, thus it befel that wor-
thy Prince, *Josiah.*

2. The unaffected inconsiderate frame of heart in the generality of men at the godly Mans death: *No man regards nor considers. i. e.* There is very little notice taken of it, much less is it a grief to them.

3. The happy state of the People of God in and at their death: *They are taken away from the evil to come, they rest in their beds, &c.* Though the world is ready to think they perish, yet as to themselves it is certain that they are safe and well.

The ill Omen that there is in the death of godly men, to the World: it is a portent, and a presage to them that are left behind, that evil is coming. Which last Particular, and which in the first Verse, consists of two parts,

1. A description of the great incogitancy of men under such awful Providences, *none considering*; the word signifies inwardly and in the mind to ponder, and distinctly to Judge of a thing: It signifies also, to know, and hence some read it, no man knows, others, no man ponders, or weighs in his mind and thoughts, which is the same with considering.

2. The subject matter about which this incogitancy is declared or expressed: Which is a sure and evident conclusion that followed from the death of the Godly, *viz. That the Righteous is taken from the evil to come.* Which conclusion,

elation, being of it self a full proposition, and also here insinuated as a matter worthy of deep meditation, may be the subject of our present discourse. In which Conclusion observe,

1. The subject, *the Righteous*, or the Just man; Which is not to be understood in a Legal sense, for one that is in all parts compleat, answering the Moral Law in every point, for so the assertion were of no comfort at all, since among Adam's Progeny descending from him by natural Generation, there is no such, *Ecc. 7. 20. There is not a Just Man upon Earth, that doeth good and sinneth not*, Pro. 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean?* Hence that, *Prov. 21. 1. A Just Man falleth seven times*: But in an Evangelical, in which Men are said to be Righteous, partly by the imputation of Christ's Righteousness. Hence that 2 Cor. 5. ult. *He was made Sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him*. Partly by the sanctification of the Spirit, by which Believers are renewed in the Image of God, and indowed with the principles of Holiness and Righteousness, and do serve God, though with much of imperfection, yet in sincerity of heart: These are the righteous men of whom this is asserted.

The Predicate, *They are taken away from the evil to come*. Where observe,

1. The thing it self which is predicated of them, *They are taken away*: The word here

used doth primarily signifie to congregate, or gather together ; and some there be who think it to be a Metaphor borrowed from a Shepherd, who, when he foresees a Storm coming, there-upon gathers his Sheep unto a place of safety, noting the happiness of the Righteous in their Death, they are gathered to the great Assembly of the first-born.

2. The end of their Being thus gathered, *from the evil to come* : in the Hebrew it is, *From the face of the evil* : i. e. From that evil which is before-hand, and (as it were) stares them in the face. The words of our Text are like a folded cloth, which looks pleasantly on the one side, and awfully on the other : If we consider them in respect the Righteous themselves, they speak their great felicity in the very circumstance of their dying, in that they are taken from the evil to come that it may not overtake them ; if we note the Aspect they have to the ungodly generation which these once lived among, they speak their great unhappiness in the loss of the Righteous, they are taken from the evil that it may come upon the World.

Hence,

Doct. *The death of the Righteous is sometimes a presaging fore-runner of approaching evil.*

The conclusion in our Text is not to be taken *κατα παντος* It is not alwayes so: Sometimes God removes the godly without any such presage:

Moses's

Moses's, and *David's* death (to name no more) were not so : But it is sometimes, and often thus : It was so here in our *Text*. In the Explication there are two things briefly to be considered, 1. When it is so : 2. The grounds of it.

1. When it is so ?

Ans. Death is a common change befalling all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* : Hence in the ordinary course of nature the Death of the Godly falls out as well in dayes wherein God is pleased with his People, as in times of displeasure : God will not only have his servants to finish their Generation in this World, but also to receive their reward in Heaven : God will sometimes remove faithful men, when they have done their appointed work, to bring in their places others that shall be useful instruments in his service. *Moses* gives place to *Joshua* ; *David* to *Solomon*. These are no ill boding symptoms, when God is ever graciously providing a succession of such for his People, who may do worthily in their time.

Hence,

There are some circumstances whereby this is to be judged as judicial and calamitous, *viz.*

1. When good men are taken away and leave their places empty : I mean there are not others to supply them that are such as they were ; but goodness in a great degree decays and dies with them ; and wicked and ungodly men succeed

and fill their room : On this account was *Jeshabab's* Death portentous ; 2 *King.* 22. 16. with 22. Thus also *Jeroboam's* Son must die, because there was some good thing found in him, that so all evil and mischief might come upon the rest of his ungodly family.

2. When a People grow degenerate, and God (by his Messengers) denounceth his Judgements against them, and now pious and useful men are taken away, for herein God begins to put his threatnings in execution: This is the Case in our *Text*: He had been threatening of them with Judgements, *Chap.* 56. 9. And now he opens a way for them to take place on them, by taking away the Righteous.

Hereto,

After Ministerial warnings of wrath against a People, the death of such persons is to be accounted, not only a preface, but also a main part of Gods accomplishment of it : We shal therefore find, that when God had uttered such threatnings as are menaced in *Isaiab*, *Chap.* 2. he proceeds in *Chap.* 3. begin. to discover the order and method of these Judgements, which was in the first place attended by the taking off of men of worth and use. *The mighty Man, the Man of War, the Judge, &c.*

2. In the consideration of the grounds of the *Doctrine* we may enquire.

1. How farr the taking away of Righteous men

men doth sometimes make way for evil to hasten and flow in upon a People?

2. Why God then takes them away, when he is about to bring evil on a place?

1. How far the taking away of Righteous men doth sometimes make way for evil to flow in?

Ans. This will appear in two things.

1. If we consider how much they did, while they were living, contribute to the keeping off evil, & procuring of good to those among whom they were. The very presence of such is a blessing: God doth much, bears much for their sakes: Ten Righteous men might have saved Sodom when they were so ripe for ruine: God gave Paul the lives of all that were in the ship with him, *Act. 27. 24.* The presence of *Jebo-shaphat* saved three Armies by a miraculous providence, when they were just ready to perish, *2 King. 3. 13.* *Lebans* affairs prospered well for *Jacob's* sake, all the while that he lived with him. God loves to dwell there where his holy and humble ones are: And besides there are two wayes in which they are instruments of keeping evil off the place where they are.

1. By keeping out a great deal of sin, which oftentimes, when they are gone, breaks in as a Flood, and brings ruine with it. Eminent upon this score was *Jeboiadab*, *2 Chro. 24.* Where it is observed how he kept things right, and Religion up.

np. *Vers. 2.* Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the dayes of Jehoiadah, but when he was once dead, and scarce cold in his Grave, all went down again, the Temple was neglected, Idolatry restored, *vers. 17. 18.* And then misery comes flowing in upon them in an awful manner, *vers. 23, 24.*

2. By their Prayers and Intercession for a sinful and provoking People: They do often by prayers and earnest supplications stay God's hand; they stand between him and his People, that he can do nothing to them: God had ruined Israel in the Wilderness for their sins had not Moses stood between and pleaded for them, *Psal. 106. 23.* Therefore he said he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath. But when such are taken away, it often falls out that there is none left to intercede, and so way is made to their ruine.

2. If we consider what usually follows upon the taking away of the Righteous, which tends to hasten a Peoples misery, *viz.* Usually upon this Religion goes to decay, Sin takes the advantage to reign without any rebuke or check, and men begin to grow impudent, when there are none left to reform them, nor any to avert the sore indignation of God from them. When *Jeshua*, and that good Generation that went with him into *Canaan* were dead, there arose a new Generation that knew not the Lord, & what followed

followed but Apostasy, and Calamity. See; *Judg. 2. 8. &c.* And this will help to illustrate the second enquiry, *viz.*

2. Why God then takes them away, when he is about to bring evil upon a place?

Answ. There may be two especial reasons assigned for this.

1. God doth it with a gracious and favourable respect to themselves: Since they could not by all their pious endeavours reclaim a degenerate People, but misery must come, God takes them away that their eyes might not see it: This God promiseth, as a special favour to *Josiah, 2 Chr. 34. 28. Thou shalt be gathered to thy Grave in Peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place.* Truly, when ever a Godly man dyes, he rests from his Labour, but when he is taken away from the face of evil, it is a particular blessing to him: How could his tender and pitiful heart have born to look upon all those Calamities which his Country, his Friends, his Children, and Relations must suffer? To see all going to Rack before his eyes, would be a lamentable sight: God therefore in great love & respect takes them home, where they are removed out of the noise or tumult of all these things, dwelling in the fulness of present Joy and Glory.

2. God doth it also that he may have no *Remora* or *Hinderence* lying in the way to stop the course

course of his anger. These were they who before held his hands, we find that he could do nothing to *Sodom* till *Lot* was out of it: And he is put to ask *Moses* to let him alone, *Exod. 32. 10.* Godly Men are God's Jewels, he cannot let fire to the Rubbish, till they are secured; they are his tender Ones to whom he hath a peculiar respect, and they must be marked, before the destroying Angel executes his Commission: they must be many times housed in their Graves before he can give full scope to his Indignation: and these are by some supposed to be those Chambers in which God calls his People to hide themselves before such a Day, *Isa. 26. 20.* But when once they are gone, now God can shut up his Bowels against a *Rebellious Nation*.

USE, I. This truth may afford us help to unfold that Riddle of *Divine Providence*: at the which many are ready to stumble, viz. That Godly men are often suddenly and strangely taken away, when wicked men are let alone, and suffered to live. It is the Wise Man's observation, *Eccles. 7. 16.* *There is a Just man that perisheth in his Righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his Life in wickedness.* Let none suppose that God therefore discountenanceth his Servants, and approves of ungodly men: no, the one is taken away in mercy to himself, though in judgement to the World, the other is spared to his greater misery, either here or hereafter.

after: Godly men, when ever they die, are then certainly happy; and at sometimes it is a peculiar priviledge for them to die; that they may get away from the sight and report of these direful dispensations of divine displeasure that are coming upon a surviving Generation. The Philosopher saith every thing hath two handles, a right and a wrong, and most men take Providence in some cases by the wrong handle; they interpret many dispensations to be Judicial, and so indeed they may be; but their folly is, that they interpret them so to be in respect of the persons suffering them, when as it is indeed to themselves: when *Solomon* had with some consternation viewed these things, he recollects himself, and draws this safe conclusion, *Eccles. 8. 12. Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God*: and so it shall; but woe to the World when holy Men flock to their graves as Doves to their Windows before a Storm: and they may when they are departing. speak to surviving Mourners in the Language of our Saviour Christ to those weeping Women, *Luk. 23. 28, 29, 30. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for your selves, and for your Children, &c.*

USE, II. This may serve to reprehend their folly who are weary of the company of righteous men: they think that the World hath been troubled with them even long enough; they look upon them as Enemies, as bulie bodies, as
Men

men that are the troublers of *Israel*; and no body can be quiet for them (so wicked *Abab* unjustly censured holy *Elijah*.)

And hence,

They take it for certain that it would be much better for the place which they live in, if they were well laid up in their Graves: They wish them in Heaven, as the vulgar note of wicked men is: What do these men do, but in effect wish and imprecate upon themselves a mischief. Should God grant them their desires upon this account, it would but carry the godly to the place of their longing, and bring them home to the house of their eternal rest: But in the mean time when they are gone, who shall plead and pray and mourn for a sinful People? Will God hear wicked sinners? Who shall stand in the Gap to keep out Judgement and Wrath? Shall wicked and ungodly men? Assure we our selves that so much of Godliness as goes away from a place, so much of God goes away too, and it may not be long ere the time comes, when those that so earnestly longed for their removal, and were inwardly satisfied and glad that they were taken away; shall as much wish that they had them again, when it will be too late.

USE. III. For Tryal; is it so sometimes, then it may put us upon the enquiry, whether there be not good ground for us to fear that it may be so with us at this day. I might urge it
more

more particularly to our selves of this Congregation from whom God hath of late years taken away many pious and precious Servants of his; and we that are left alive ought to lay it to heart. But I shall take liberty to urge it on a more publick account as it bears respect to this People in general; and here give me leave to further this tryal, by leaving such things as these to consideration.

1. They are Apostatizing or declining times, by reason of which there is (doubtless) much of provocation offered to the holy Majesty of Heaven: I need not to seek out witnesses for this, *Habemus confitentes reos*; yea, and God himself hath also testified to it in his many awful and amazing providences: It is a thing too manifest, that the power of Godliness is now under great decayes, and many sins begin to look abroad, and dare to hold up their heads: And from hence we may safely conclude that it is a day of rebuke.

2. The faithful servants of God, who have been called to declare his mind in the most publick, and general Assemblies, have predicted and forewarned us of Judgement coming, except by repentance we prevent it: This hath been a point in which there hath been such an universal concurrence, that we have abundant reason to conclude that there hath been much of the presence of God with them in it; They have
from

from one time to another solemnly warned us of, and called upon us to prepare for these calamities.

3. Since the time wherein God by his servants began to treat us with these warnings, his hand hath bin awfully out upon us in taking away eminent, useful, publique & pious men: God hath since that time seemed to be upon quick dispatches in that busines, our eys have scarcely bin dry for one (though alas! they are too soon dry) but anothers death hath alarum'd us: the ancient pillars on which our foundations once stood strong are almost all gon, yea & also many young ones, and very likely to have bin eminently usefull, to have bin placed in their roomes, and hopefull to have made up the breach have bin pluckt out agen, as it were by force.

4. It is sadly observable, that the spirit of zeal for God, and Holiness, hath died apace with them. We may in a deplorable degree say of our times, not only that the godly men die, but that they cease: we are not now put to it to know whom to employ in our publick concerns in the Magistracy and Ministry, yea, and other places of weight, by reason of multiplicity of choice, as it hath sometimes been, but rather for want of choice: how many Congregations do now want to have the bread of Life to be broken to them, and are at a los how to obtain it and in all sorts of men, there seems to be a dying

dying (at least a fainting) of Religion, with the death of the Religious: and though (through mercy) God hath a number yet, of choise and faithful ones, yet their hands are thus weakned, and the sons of *Zeruiab* begin to put out their heads and speak insultingly.

5. Nor is it a little to be lamented, that those men dye in a great measure unlamented ; yea, by too many reproached : and this is the sad note of our *Context*, men lay it not to heart, nor consider the hand of God in these things. Now let us lay all these things together, and see if they do not solemnly speak that we have reason to be afraid that God hath removed them in order to some sore and dreadful calamity which he is preparing for us, except he be in time prevented, and therefore.

USE. IV. It calls upon us seriously to consider, and solemnly to lay to heart the providence of God in this respect : It may teach us sadly to bewail, and greatly to lament the loss of so many righteous men as God hath lately taken from us, for them indeed, we have cause of congratulation, for they are taken from the evil to come ; but for our selves, there is reason to mourn, because their going bodes and beckens evil a coming, and at the door : I might here urge many incentives ; but I shall only say this much ; that to be duly affected with Gods hand, and to hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it, may be a

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mean

mean to continue our tranquillity : God is angry with the World, when his Children are unlamented, he takes it well when their loss is bewailed : And if we would make a right improvement of these things, let us lament, and repent of those sins which have procured us these miseries ; let us say, *Wo to us, that we have sinned.* Have not the Righteous been slighted, and requited for all their faithful service ? Have we not slandered, reviled, and trampled upon them ? And was it not then time for God to take them to a place where they should be in more honour and esteem ? Repent of these sins, lest you hurry away those that are left, and then you may too late sit down and howle out your *Lehabod*. Oh ! be not brutish, but sit down and consider : when the Pillars are gone, how shall the building stand ? When the Watch-men are asleep, who shall descry, and warn us of the enemies approach ? When the Wall is pluckt down, and the hedge removed, who shall keep out the Bore of the Wilderness ? When the Gap-men are taken away, who shall stand in the breaches ? When the lights are put out, who shall direct us in a right way ? When the Chariot and Horsemen of *Israel* are removed, who shall defend us from misery and mischief ? When God is gone, what but woes and calamities can befall us ?

God hath now for a long time been pleading with *N. E.* in this kind, how many precious names

names are there registred in the black bill of a
 few years? nor is his anger turned away, but
 his hand is stretched out still. And now God
 calls us again to a further occasion of deep
 consideration, by that awful hand of his
 in the sudden and unexpected departure of
 that precious one from us, and that at such a
 time as this. I know he was gathered to his Peo-
 ple in a good old age and full of dayes. he lived
 long enough for himself, but dyed too soon for
 his. I will not be curious in noting the day of his
 removal, though I believe that it deserves its
 remark: nor need I give light to his personal
 worth, which challengeth a sorrowful rememb-
 rance of us; his own works shall praise him in
 the gates: And though some evil tongues
 (which evermore account much deserving a
 fault) have sought to blemish him, yet his name
 shall live in despite of envy it self. His long ser-
 vice in publick employment; and his skilfulness
 in the service; his great dexterity in milita-
 ry Discipline (a thing now indeed little valued
 degenerate spirits) and his great industry
 propagating it to those under his guidance;
 love to his Country, rewarded, not in a few
 empty words, but real deat^h; his averting
 himself in the highest places of the field, in
 greatest difficultyes and hazards, and that of-
 ten and again, at such time as eminentest dang-
 ers threatned us, and enemies flushed with succe-

were most insolent ; yea, and then when for his years he might have received his white wand, and been acknowledged to be *Miles emeritus* ; his tender care for the welfare of this people (under the weight whereof, there is good ground to think, that he sunk and dyed) these things I say, besides his uprightness towards God as a private Christian, his tenderness and love to his brethren as a member of the Church, his affability and sweet deportment towards all men in his ordinary converse, speak eminently his worth, and our loss. He is now gone from an unthankful world, to receive his reward with God. But that which most of all should affect us, is, that by his removal, the gap is wider, and we left the more naked. Repent then, and return to the Lord ; pray hard for those that are left, that you be not utterly stript and bereaved : Be prudent, foresee the evil and hide your selves, take the presage to be awakened to meet your God in that way wherein he is ready to receive and be reconciled to a sinful People, and repent of the evil which he is ready to bring upon them ; lest otherwise, if you now neither believe nor consider. Your sad experience do too late convince you, and extort that better confession from you, that such have been taken away from the evil to come.

F I N I S.

The only sure way to prevent threatned
CALAMITY : As it was delivered
 in a **SERMON**, Preached at
 the **COURT of ELECION**,
 May, 24. 1682.

Jer. 26. 12, 13.

*Then spake Jeremiah unto all the Princes, and to
 all the People, saying, The Lord sent me to pro-
 phesie against this House, against this City, all
 the words that ye have heard.*

*Verf. 13. Therefore now amend your wayes and your
 doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God,
 and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he
 hath pronounced against you.*

Such is the unhappy entertainment that
 plain-dealing and open-hearted re-
 proofs do meet with in the World, that
 when they are most needed, they can
 be least born : The fouler the sto-
 mach, the more nauseous is the Physick : when
 the malady is come to a dangerous Crisis, and
 every

every symptom bodes a sad and sudden change, men are better pleased with a cheating quack, that dissembleth the disease, and engaged all shall be well, then with an honest and faithful Physitian, who tells them the distemper is malignant, the issue dubious, and, without the application of some speedy and extraordinary means, desperate. He that will undertake to lay open the true state of degenerate People, by ripping up their sins, displaying their impenitencies, and applying the threatnings of Divine displeasure, shall expose himself to the hatred and injurious usage of those for whom he doth this kindness : Apostacy being a spiritual frenzy, and herein expressing an affinity with madmen, in being enraged at none so much, as those that in love seek their cure. The truth of this our Prophet here experienced ; who, being sent by God on an unthankful errand (for when men love the distemper, they do by consequence despise the remedy, and hate him that brings it. And I therefore call it unthankful, not from its own nature, for what can be a more obliging courtesie than to give men timely notice of eminent dangers, & counsel how to avoid them : But from the disposition of those who were to receive it, whom custom in sin had wedded to a complacency in it ; whose pride and presumption had made them impatient of all threatnings ; and in whom deep rooted impenitence had ob-

structed

structed the reception of every advice calling them to reformation) being thus sent, he faithfully and clearly opens their state, shews them their hazzards, directs to such duties as the present circumstances required, promiseth them a good issue, if they were so followed, but denounceth ruine if they were neglected. And now (as if he had been guilty of Treason, and had joyned hands in some dangerous conspiracy) the Priests, Prophets, and People, in a transport of fury, lay violent hands on him in the very Temple, and nothing can satisfie their hellish rage but the Prophets life. The Princes, (who, though possibly they had but little, if any thing more of Religion then the rest, yet pretending to more civility) enterpose in this fray, and call the matter to a legal hearing; which (by the over-ruling providence of God) determineth in his delivery out of their hands.

The Principal things observable in this transaction, are, the Peoples Accusation, and *Jeremiab's* Apology. The former is briefly touched in *vers. 11.* in which, while they pretend to accuse, they undertake to Judge, and with a full cry pronounce him a man of death. *This man is worthy to dye; or, the judgement of death is for this man,* as the *Hebrew* text reads it: Which lest they should seem to have spoken of prejudice, they article against him for sedition: *For he hath spoken against this City:* nor need witnesses be

sought, for they themselves had *heard it with their ears*. We see what different interpretations the words and actions of men ly open unto ; how change of times changeth mens opinions of things ; how dangerous it is for men to speak the truth in Apostatizing times. *Micah* the *Morast-bite* delivered a more fearful, because a more positive Prophecie, in the dayes of *Hzekiah*, *Mic. 3. 12.* *Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forrest.* And yet was not branded for a turbulent person, nor prosecuted as a ring-leader of sedition ; but received as a Prophet of the Lord, and his prediction improved to repentance, which averted eminent desolation. *Jeremiah* so threatens calamity, as withal to promise mercy, in case of sound repentance ; and he is an offender, prophesieth against the City, and no less than his blood can serve to expiate his crime. How happy a thing is it to preach to a pious Generation, who, because they hate their sins, love their reprovers ? How unhappy to come to a People wedded to their wicked wayes, who count those their enemies who are so to their lust ? As for the Prophets Apology, I need, for the present occasion, to take notice only of the just defence which he makes both of himself and his prophecie, which is contained in the *Text*. The Persons before whom he makes it are the Princes, and all the People

People; under whom we may list the Priests and Prophets, unless we look on these as his accusers, and the other, as those to whom he appeals as Judges.

The Vindication it self consists of two Parts.

1. A clearing up of the Authority by which he had spoken; *Their Lord (Jehovah) sent me to prophesie*: Divine Authority gives a supersedeas to humane Laws: They may make it Capital to speak against their wayes and doings; but if God Authorize his Servants to it, it is no Crime in them, but a duty to cry aloud and not to spare.

The Prophets Commission comprizeth the full of their Accusation: He might have prophesied against other Nations without their offences; but that he doth it against this City, this is the provocation: He therefore asserts his particular charge, *To prophesie against this House and this City*: *Grotius* indeed lenifies the expression, and would have the words read, *To this House, and to this City*: Noting that the prophesie was for them, and not against them: And indeed convincing and awakening preaching would be so, if a People had wisdom and grace rightly to improve it: But suppose it against them, yet if God be against a People, and would have them to know it, should the Prophet obey man or God? Especially, if he exceeds not the bounds of his com-

commission, which *Jeremiah* here further asserts for the Lord sent him to *speake all the words which they had heard*; he had not added one of his own head: And must the Herald be impeached for proclaiming the King's Edicts?

2. The end of his prophesie, *viz.* if it might be to prevent their ruine, which he therefore delivers in way of Exhortation; *Therefore now amend your wayes and your doings*, &c. I name that Exhortation as a branch of his defence, because he doth therein explicate what he had before delivered in the prophesie it self. *Vers. 3.* And also insinuates that his errand and business was not to triumph over them, but compassionately to endeavour the prevention of all the evil denounced: It is, *q. d.* Wherein have I offended? I have only studied your peace and safety; only advised to means of delivery and establishment, and is this a Crime? Must I dye for this? He therefore gives them a safe direction, and backs it with a perswasive encouragement.

The Direction is to Repentance, and Reformation, and designs the rectifying both of heart and life, projects and practices. *Amen*, the word is, *make good*, noting they had been bad, which called for amendment or reformation. *Your way and doings*; *Calvin* reads it, *your wayes and studies*: The word signifies, thing done by study, plotting, design and deliberation; *And obey the voice of the Lord your God.*

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The word is, *Hear*, and is the frequent Scripture expression of obedience: By the voice of God as intended the will of God delivered in his Word, intimating that he brought no new Commands to them, but only studied to reduce them to the obedience of God's Law, of which they professed themselves the subjects (if they would studiously consider, and compare themselves by it) they might easily know their present course to be Judged and Condemned.

The encouragement is full, and clears the Prophet from the imputation of any studied mischief, in as much as he gives them to understand, that if his Counsel be embraced and faithfully put in execution all the threatnings of wrath and ruine shall cease, as having attained their appointed end.

Hence,

He brings in God as clothed with humane affection, ready to sympathize with the miseries of a penitent People, and reverse the sentence passed against them. *The Lord shall repent, &c.* The word firstly signifies to be grieved and sorry for one, and then to repent of any thing we have said or done against them, and finally to change ones mind, or alter ones purpose. But is God capable of perturbation? Can the infinitely blessed Being suffer any disturbance or grief? Or can the immutable and everlasting will of God be changed? No, but an unchange-
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able Decree, may ordain changeable Providences, and an immutable God may vary his works according to the changes of the subject, and all this agreeably to invariable counsel: And there may be such effects wrought, which, to the conception of men, proceed from a different principle. God had pronounced a sentence of desolation against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, but if they repent the sentence shall not take effect, but cease.

Hence,

The *Septuagint* translates it, he shall cease, or desist; which gives the true intent of the phrase, though not the *Grammatical* construction of the Word.

There are two conclusions, proper from the Words, and pertinent to the present occasion, offer themselves to our meditation, *viz.*

Doct. 1. When God commissioneth his Ministers, to denounce awful threatnings against an Apostatizing Generation, they must deliver, and these ought to apply them.

It is to the one a warrant for Justification, & to the other a warning for serious consideration. It is true, it is not every ones place and work. He had need be able to say, *The Lord sent me*, that will undertake to pronounce a sentence full of woes upon a whole People; yea, and through-
ly

ly to ponder every word, that he may be sure he shall have God himself to patronize him. But if God do indeed say, *Go and prophecie, and speak all these words in their hearing*, it would be rebellion in them to keep silence, and will be pernicious for that People who receive them not.

The way indeed wherein the Prophets of old received intimation of the will of God, viz. By Visions, Dreams, immediate Revelations, &c. As it was extraordinary, so it is now shut up: But yet there remains a more sure word of prophecie, and no less infallible evidence of God's mind in general, and our call in particular,

For,

1. Christ's Ministers are set as Watch-men, under a solemn and strict charge, to look out and espy all approaching dangers, and give timely warning of them, *Ezek. 3. 17, 18*. They must give the alarm though it be at mid night, when it is like to be most surprizing, and men are loth to be bereaved of their beloved sleep. Men naturally love security, and like not to be disturbed: But what shall those Watch men do? Christ hath placed them on the Watch-tower, and put a Trumpet in their hands, charging them upon pain of death to sound when occasion calls for it.

2. The spiritual presence of Christ with his faithful Messengers abides perpetually engaged to

to stand by them, and afford them all the necessary assistance which their Calling and Duty doth require. Were it not for this their charge were insupportable, their burden intolerable for, *Who is sufficient for these things?* But he hath given his word for it, *Mat. 28. ult. Lo! I am with you to the end of the World.*

3. The Word of God is a sure rule by which to discover the true and proper state of any People, so far forth as to afford sufficient light and direction for their warning, if we compare them thereby. It is true, the sovereignty of his secret will is not there stinted, nor can we from thence certainly determine what God will undoubtedly do with these or those: Neither did God always discover this to his Prophets of old, nor yet did they so understand him. *Jonah* upon this very suspicion waved his errand, *Chap. 4. 2. Was not this my saying in my Country? Therefore I fled unto Tarsish, for I knew thou art a gracious God, &c.* But yet the Word of God evidently declares, when it is that a People comes within the compass, of the threatening, when they are cast in common Law. Gods revealed will is once and perpetual: If men break Covenant with God, and falsify their engagements to him; they bring themselves under the threatnings of the word, there is a sentence out against them, and those that are God's Watch-men may espouse it. If then they declare against such wayes, and

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proclaim that there is Wrath gone forth, and Calamities before us, even at the door, and daily to be expected, they herein say not a word more than what they have God's warrant and Command for.

4. God sometimes gives his servants a particular, special opportunity to declare his mind against a sinful Generation. Thus he did unto *Jeremiah* at this time, when the people were gathered out of all their cities to one of the great feasts at *Jerusalem*, and there was a general concourse of them to the Temple. And when it is thus, to omit the improving a price in our hands, is to play the fool egregiously. The wise-man tells us there is a season to every purpose, and sometimes this season comes once and no more, the neglect whereof proves irreparable, and leaves a woful sting upon the Conscience.

5. There are also sometimes deep and powerful impressions upon the minds of God's Messengers, which by an irresistible impulse, constrain them to bear open and publick witness against the sins of the times and places which they live in. I am far from pleading for, or justifying any thing that looks like *Enthusiasm*, or thinking that men should make a secret *impetus* upon their spirits the rule and plea of their words and actions. But, if men who are called by God to declare his counsel, advantaged by his provi-

dence

dence to proclaim his pleasure, directed by his word to speak nothing but what is agreeing thereunto; are prest in their spirits to a zealous witness bearing against these and those prevailing sins and solemnly to denounce the Judgements of God against them, if men repent not. I believe there is much of God in it, and it carries a great evidence along with it, that God is about to do some speedy, strange work there, if he be not prevented. When we are in such a frame as our Prophet was, *Jer. 20. 9. His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay. Or as Elihu, Job 32. 18. I am full of matter, the spirit within constraineth me.*

And when it is thus, it concerns such a People to apply these things to themselves: It becomes them not now to take exceptions and grow into a rage, but to lay them to heart. These things are of God, and not in vain: They alarm a People to prepare to meet their God; and if by repentance they are not refreshed healing to them, they will prove killing words: The sword of his mouth will hew them in pieces, *Hos. 6. 5. I have bewed them by my Prophecy, and slain them by the words of my mouth.* God is not wont to let such words perish, and come to nought; yea, though he may defer to accomplish, yet he will not disannul them: They may be deferred a while, but they ly in reserve against the due time.

Doct.

Doct. 2. *Universal and through Repentance and Reformation, is an only and sure way to escape the threatened Judgements of God.*

Universal ; both referring to the subject, *viz.* All orders of men from the highest to the lowest. *Jeremiah* directs his advice to the Princes, Priests, Prophets, and People, and in respect of the term from which ; all sin, every false way : and *Through* ; not in pretence only, or in part. Not like that of *Jehu's*, who took away *Baal* out of *Israel*, but retained *Jeroboam's* sin : Nor only like that of some good Kings of *Judah* of whom it is said, they did that which was right, but still the high places were left standing, and the People sacrificed at them : But like *Hezekiah's*, and *Josiah's*, who sought to remove every offence : And there must be *both Repentance and Reformation* : A work that reacheth to both heart and life, both inward and outward man. Of what efficacy this is will appear, if we shall consider.

1. That this is the privilege of a People in visible Covenant with God, that there is no threatening denounced against them, but with a gracious reserve and room to reverse it in case of Repentance. God sometimes indeed seems to speak positively, but then, to lenesie such absolute threatnings, and render them equivalent to

Hypothetical, he speaks after the manner of men, of repenting. God imitates his own Law, for in making of War, he first proffers Peace, and presents men with termes of compliance: When he takes up armes, he would be glad if there were some to hold his hands: When he saith I will do thus, yet then he wistheth *Israel to prepare to meet him*, *Amos 4. 12.* If a People of God suffer at his hands, it shall be through their own wilfulness. God can threaten and never execute, and yet be God unchangeable, alwayes provided his People do truly repent and amend their wayes and doings.

2. God therefore lends his Ambassadors to plead with his People about their sins, and publish his Judgements, that they may have motive and opportunity to repent. Divine threatnings are Expostulatory and awakening: They are to convince men of their sin, and to put them in awe: They are to see if words will do, that blows may be spared. After threatnings therefore God hearkens, *Jer. 8. 6. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright.* God might else strike as well as menace; yea, it were as easie, nay and as merciful for him so to do, were it not that he had rather men should live than dye.

Hence therefore,
The Proclamations of War which God makes against a revolting People, are to be annumerated to his long-suffering.

3. This

3. This only can put a stop to the wrath of God from proceeding; for, as the promise is full to the Penitent, so the threatening is as Positive, and as much without reserves to those that are impenitent. When a People say, either with their tongues or with their practices, there is no hope, but they will follow after their own courses, God also saith, there is no hope, but he will poure out his fury upon them. So that when God hath a purpose of mercy to a rebellious People, and is resolved to exalt his Grace upon them, and also makes known these purposes in those discoveries which we call absolute Promises, he doth it so as not to cross this Rule of his Covenant with People, and therefore engageth not only to give deliverance from his Judgements; but also to do it in such a way, as withal to give them the condition, *I sa. 57. 18. I have seen his wayes, and I will heal him, &c.* If therefore Repentance be (under and after much forbearance) neglected, it is both a reason why, and sign that the decree, when it hath gone out its full time, shall certainly bring forth.

4. God expresseth himself better pleased at the Repentance of his People, and thereby extinguishing of the fire of his anger, than if it had burnt up and consumed them. He therefore gives oath that he delights not in their death, professeth that he rejoyceth in their returning: like a tender Father, who is glad if any means

will reclaim his refractory, and disobedient Son whom he loveth, and for whose good he longs.

Hence,

Psal. 81. 14. Oh, that my People had been obedient unto me, and Israel had walked in my wayes. And we may truly apply that of Solomon unto Jesus Christ as the Antitype, *Pro. 23. 15. My Son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoyce, even mine.* He reckons himself to have gained a greater conquest, when he hath won the hearts of his People to fear and serve him, than when he hath broken his enemies as Potters shreds, with the Scepter of his Power.

USE. That I may render these truths practicable, and accommodate them to the use and benefit of this People, give me leave to deal in all plainness and integrity. As I would not give flattering words, lest God should destroy me, so neither would I designedly provoke or move any to anger, except it be at his sins. I shall therefore endeavour to speak words of truth and soberness; and yet chuse rather to offend man than provoke the most high.

There are two Uses I have to suggest, unto which I shal reduce those few words which I have to speak; the one by way of Conviction, the other of Exhortation.

I. For Conviction: Let us solemnly consider, and rightly weigh whether or no those words which have been spoken against this Place

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and People on such occasions as this, were not such words as God commanded those that delivered them to come and speak. I must confess, when I seriously look upon this People in their constitution Civil and Ecclesiastical, molded in the one under wholesome Laws, in the other under strict and sacred Covenants : When I consider that the management of these is under the hands of a Pious and Prudent Magistracy, a godly and learned Ministry : When I think how many there are whose hearts are upright with God, and do not wickedly depart from his Covenant : When I mind that by the very confession of unprejudiced strangers, here is more of sobriety and honest conversation, then almost in any place they have occasion to be conversant in : It seems hard to believe that God who is full of Mercy and Pity, who knows this frame of ours, and minds that we are but dust, should declare against us, though many infirmities should appear in the midst of us : And could be willing to think that all the warnings & menaces which have been uttered by these or those, were nothing else but the mistakes of an (irregular) though well minded) zeal, or the dumps and night visions of some melancholick spirits, and thus indeed were the Prophets of old censured. But when I thoroughly weigh all circumstances in an equal ballance, I dare not but conclude that the Lord hath sent them to speak all these words. What

they have spoken is for the most part upon Record, and commended to us in Print : Wherein we are impeached for degeneracy, threatened with the Judgements of God if we amend not, and thence solemnly advised and invited to Repent. If they understood the mind of God, then are we far from being safe and secure from eminent dangers. I know they have been condemned by some, contemned by many more, scarcely believed by any, if we are to take the evidence of mens faith by their works. But if we shall ponder such things as these, they may leave conviction behind them.

1. They were the Lords faithful Watch-men, who gave this Alarum. Not men that came upon their own heads, but were set up by the will of God to descry and give notice of his mind to his People : And these are such as God is wont to make known his counsels to, *Amos 3.*

7. *Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets to his Servants the Prophets :* They were such as truly feared God, and would not dare to prophesie lyes in the name of the Lord.

2. They were such as loved, and laboured for the peace and prosperity of this People : Who could truly (with the Prophet) appeal to him who knows the heart, that they desire not that woeful day : Friends, and not Enemies to our Zion, who loved and stood up for the way of these Churches, who prayed for the peace of our

Jerusalem

Jerusalem; Who mourned in secret for the sins of the land, and to their ability strongly endeavoured to stop the course of them, and to prevent the eruptions of God's Wrath: Who preached the displeasure of God with pity and compassion, entreating and encouraging to Repentance.

3. They delivered not these messages, without many heavy pangs and throes, upon their own spirits. This roll was bitter to them, and with a great deal of reluctancy and unwillingness did they declare themselves. I my self have heard some of them expressing what Combats, what Wrestling they have had in their own minds, how loth to speak, how fearful about their message, how well they could have been content to enjoy the good-will of the People, and how greatly unwilling they were to be an occasion of adding to the guilt of those that had already run too deep on account with God: And, could they have so satisfied their own consciences, and been clear of blood, would have altogether held their peace: Yea, sometimes had said as the Prophet, *Chap. 20. 9. I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his Name.*

4. There hath been great harmony and concurrence in these Testimonies. It hath not been the voice only of one or two, but such things have been told us from year to year, And though God may put a lying spirit into four hundred

false Prophets, yet he is not wont so to deceive his own servants. If they all are misled, what shall we do? or where shall we seek for the Word of the Lord? or would not that it self be a clear evidence of Gods great displeasure against his People, if it be indeed arrived at this, *that there is no Prophet, nor any one that can tell how long?*

5. God himself hath sealed the truth of their warnings with many awful Providences: The language wherof, had there been no interpreter, hath spoken his anger with clearest demonstration. The Rod hath spoken as well as the Word; and every Rod hath come after such solemn Words of warning as have been too generally entertained in the quality of tales and falsehoods. And if God hath in part accomplished the predictions of his servant, may we not rationally and Religiously Judge, that the remainder shall have their time of accomplishment too, except we shall attend to the due means of prevention?

6. The Grounds and Reasons of these threatenings are found in the midst of us. They have not only declared the anger of an holy and jealous God, but also drawn up our indictment, and entered Gods Plea against us, and fully answered all our reasons of appeal: They have shewn *Judah* their Transgressions, and the house of *Jacob* their Sins; yea, such sins as according to
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the word of God (that rule of procedure between him and his People) are found to be incentives of Divine displeasure; such as raise up God's jealousy, and kindle his anger against those that are so found guilty of them: Nor yet have they done this of their own meer surmize:

But,

7. We have, at least verbally, acknowledged a Judgement in many, yea, the most, if not all which they have charged us withal: Witness the proposed grounds for many days of fasting, issued out from those who stand as the representatives of this People: Witness the confessions and acknowledgments which have been on such dayes made unto God: And that which will stand up for a full clearing of this truth against us, witness the Records of the last Synod, in which we shall find the full and free consent of the Elders and Messengers of these Churches, acknowledging that the hand of God is out against this People awful in tokens of wrath; and giving him the Glory, by confessing that there are these and those sins, not only fallen into through infirmity, but so prevalent in the midst of us, as to acquit, not only a just, but a merciful God too in all his severities against us. And shall we not yet believe? Or shall we say to *Jeremiab*, the Lord sent thee not, but *Baruch* stirreth thee up? Shall we say, we have such a Magistracy, such a Ministry, such Churches, and therefore what

what need we to fear? When did *Micah* say, *Zion shall be ploughed as a field*? Was it not in the days of good *Hezekiah*? When did God say *I will remove Judah out of my sight*? Or when did *Zephaniah* deliver his terrible prophecies, but in the days of godly *Josiah*? All I shall here add is thus much: If God's faithful Messengers are to be believed when speaking from God himself; if the Word of God be to be credited which they have delivered to us; if the concurrence of so many (divers of whom are now with God) be of any weight; if Providence may be thought to speak any thing, and the Rod have a voice in it; if to be self-Judged and Condemned be of any efficacy; then there is an hand-writing of God given out against us; and therefore let it be.

2. For Exhortation: Be we perswaded to make it our serious endeavour, by an universal and through Repentance to seek a way to escape the after effects of God's displeasure. Let us obey the voice of the Lord our God; let us amend, and God will repent.

I might urge many things strongly argumentative to press the great necessity of this Duty, let it suffice to give some brief hints.

1. Remember your Profession to the World. How oft have you given it out that your design, and main business here is to promote the service of Christ, and maintain the interest of the Gospel?

pel; Which is then only upheld when a People stick close to the Law and to the Testimony, walking by the holy Rules of Scripture, in conformity to the revealed will of God in his Word, and can only be your Glory among the Nations, and will be so if you thus do, otherwise your very profession will be your shame.

2. Remember your Covenants, and solemn Engagements to be the Lords. How you have called God to witness, and bound your selves in an oath and a curse to serve God, and him only: How you have avouched him to be your Lord and Law-giver, and renounced the guidance of your own wills and lusts. And if you ly under breach of Covenant, and can so content your selves, and not return again to the Lord, how can you escape from bringing your selves under the dreadful guilt of taking his name in vain. To the vindication whereof, his holiness stands firmly engaged.

3. Forget not your own Confession. How oft have ye made large and full declarations against your selves? Such hath been the evident and notorious declination of the power of Godliness, and manifest growth of iniquity, that we have been constrained to confess it, God hath extorted it out of our mouths: And know this, that sins confessed and not repented of will be an heavy indictment against a People, professing themselves the servants of God, when out of
their

their mouths they shall be Judged, and many stripes shall be inflicted on such as knew the Lords will and did it not.

4. Think how many Calls you have had to Repentance. The mercies of God to our Fathers, and continued to our selves ; by these God expostulates, *Jer. 2. 5. What iniquity did your Fathers find in me, that ye are gone so far away?* And *vers. 31. Have I been a Wilderness to Israel, a land of darkness?* The Judgements of God which have been upon the land ; these are Doctrinal, *Isa. 26. 9. When thy Judgements are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World shall learn Righteousness.* The Patience of God wherein he hath given you a space to repent, this is not forgotten, *Rev. 2. 21. I gave her a space to Repent, and she Repented not.* The continual cry of the Ministry by powerful convictions, severe comminations, gracious promises followed with earnest and unwearied entreaties ; God keeps a Register of these, *Jer. 25. 4, 5. The Lord hath sent unto you all his Prophets, rising up early, and sending them : They said, turn again every one from his evil way, &c.*

5. God hath thoughts of good for you, if you will Repent. He hath not forgotten the love of your Fathers, who followed him into a Wilderness, a Land that was not sown : He hath a respect for the faithful in the land : Though the Axe be up, and ready to fall, yet he sees a few clusters,

ters, and will say spare it, for there is a blessing in it. And I cannot but be perswaded that God hath good things yet in reserve for *New-England*; but he expects your reformation, and that you acknowledge and turn from your sins. And yet I am afraid there is more to do, and some severe tryals to befall us in order to this: For God will do for his People in wayes suitable to his own ends, and such which shall recommend him to be a God glorious in Holiness.

6. Know it, there yet wants such a Repentance as God requires; and that notwithstanding all that he hath said or done. Though he hath convinced us, counselled us, warned, threatened, smitten, renewed his Judgements with breach upon breach, altered his course, tryed us in one fire, and after in another, the old scent yet remains: This may be the burden of the Song, and make up the period of every plea, *yet have ye not returned to me, saith the Lord.*

7. Our present condition and exigencies call for speedy Repentance. It will be our wisdom and can alone be our safety, : Men are against us, and that which is most awful, to consider, is, God seems to be against us too. Providences look to an eye of reason, as if they were conspiring to bring a further day of trouble upon us. On all the Glory, whereon there was sometimes a defence, there now appears to be a blast. We are brought low in our outward affairs, and low

in spiritual things, and some sudden and doleful change looks as if it were at the door. But if we may recover Gods gracious presence, and re-engage his protection, all shall be well : Yet if not now done, a few dayes may summe up and cancel our felicity, and we be left to sigh out our Ichabod.

I shall not need to be prolix in the directive part of this use, since divers that have gone before me, have largely unfolded our particular estate, and prescribed rules for our recovery : Both informed us what there is of sin prevailing, and wherein we may so testifie our Repentance as to obtain a repeal of that sentence which hath been past against us. Yet if I could help to drive home any of these nails, I should think it labour not in vain. I need but say, if you will believe the Messengers of Christ ; nay, if you will but believe your selves and your own confessions, there is work enough cut out for your reformation : Do but amend cordially what you have acknowledged to be amiss, and I dare affirm that God will accept it, : I shall not so far trespass on the time, and other occasions as to urge every particular : It may suffice to hint at some things which seem especially to call for our speedy and extraordinary endeavours, and these do more immediately concern.

I. The body of this People considered as invested with liberties, and engaged as one man for

for the upholding of them in wayes according to God. Let me tell you that *for the Division of Reuben there are great searching of heart.* These jealousies and suspitions one to another, those minings and counterminings that are among you, those aspersions and defamations which you cast one upon another, and upon your best friends, those endeavours to strengthen a Party, and countermand your brethren, are provoking to God, and like to prove ruinating to your selves. It is not a sin only, but a Judgement too, and that which tends to issue in misery, *Hos. 10. 2. Their heart is divided, now shall they be found guilty.* Gal. 5. 15. *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.* Your security is in being one for God: your safety is only in unity. There are enough abroad who watch for your halting, you need not your selves lay open one anothers infirmities: And one would think it might sufficiently awaken you to think how little Gods work goes forward, or his Glory strenuously promoted, while men spend their little zeal in oppositions and invectives one against another, as if herein lay the life of Religion. This picks out the cement, and crumbleth away the mortar, which is the strength of the building, and when gone, with what ease may it be made to fall? To remedy this, put on charity. When Gods People agree in the end, though for a while they may not

Judge

Judge alike of the means to it in some critical points and circumstance, it is far from a Christian spirit so to abound in our own sense, as to proclaim or declare such enemies to the cause of God, that speak not in every punctilio with us. Men of the largest charity here, are the best friends to this Cause. It is Gods will and wisdom that his People should in many things beat out their way by debates: But men that may not be thwarted in their own private sentiments, are dangerous Coals, fitted to kindle a destroying fire among us.

2. These Churches as tyed up in the strictest bonds of Covenant to be the Lords: Whose great receding from, and manifold notorious breaches of this Covenant of God, do strongly call for, and vehemently urge, solemn and serious renewals of it before him. Essayes towards this, I confess, have been made by several Churches: But what damps and demurs are cast on the work by the many that hold back, is matter of lamentation: And truly the reason rendred by many makes it still the more lamentable, *viz.* Lest it should encrease the guilt of the Churches through neglect of performance. If indeed it be come to that, that we are resolved to mend nothing, then Covenants of Reformation will prove dangerous things: But may we not upon the some plea raze out our old Covenant, cast off our Religion, resolve to be under no engagement

ment to God at all, and say to him, *We are Lords, and will come no more unto thee?* All I will here urge is this; if these Churches are not prepared to renew their Covenant with God, they are not prepared for mercy: If the way of our Anasie be more dangerous than our state of Apostasie, our danger is tremendous: If all confess that spiritual slumber, luke-warmness, earthly-mindedness, slighting of Ordinances, undervaluing of the Messengers of Christ, carnal compliance with the World, and many the like evils are crept into, and prevail much over our Churches, and the Covenant-People of God are not capable of a resolute, strenuous, and voluntary engagement to the rooting of these out, our wound is next to incurable.

3. To the representative body of this Government assembled in General-Court; on whom it lyes as an indispensable duty to endeavour the maintainance of God's Glory, and to put forth utmost care for the securing of the interest of the true Religion, and extirpation of that which is false. The prevalency of corrupt Doctrines, and impudent boldness of many in prosecution of them, calls for your vigilant and resolute industry in the suppression thereof. I am not ignorant to how much calumny I expose my self in mentioning this point; but it is in Gods cause which I may not decline for fear of reproach. I have often heard (though, I must

needs confess, not without some secret regrets) the Encomiastick titles put upon this Government, as if it were singularly a Theocracy, and carried in it a glorious specimen of the Kingly Government of Christ : But I fear, if this Government decline, or think it not their concern vigorously to extend their power in upholding the duties of the first Table, and secure them from the invasion of perverse men, these will be found no more than a few empty Hyperbolies. I confess, your legislative power is limited, and must take its measure from your Charter ; nor do I advise to exceed that which God's providence hath invested you withal. I believe it shall never be charged as a sin upon you, that you did (with grief of heart) bear with those things which you could not regularly confront. But if men, upon pretence of Conscience (and who will not pretend it, if they may find it a shelter against Justice, ?) If thus, I say, they may be suffered (though it be in your hand to oppose them) without any restraint to run to and fro. Disseminate their erroneous principles, make breaches in Churches, undermine and seduce silly souls, set up their Posts by God's Posts, enjoy as free and publick liberty to carry on their own wayes, as those Churches of Christ whom you profess to countenance and defend, and that by a total silence, and a full connivance ; if thus you can tolerate the dishonour of Christ, let me boldly

boldly say, I believe he will soon and signally
testifie his dislike of it.

4 To the Honoured Magistrates, and all
such as have an Executive power in their hands.
It is an observation of one, that nothing is more
dangerous and disgraceful than to suffer Laws to
ly by unprofitable, for want of Execution. The
best Laws, if only promulgated and not pursu-
ed, will not promote a Reformation. Some in-
deed are of the mind, that it is good to have
Laws as a Testimony of your dislike of such
& such practices though never prosecuted against
the breakers of them: But, besides that the vio-
lating of one Law with impunity, will naturally
embolden to a like violation of others, under
the same presumption; such Laws will indeed
be a witness, not for, but against a People, that
they thought, and were in conscience perswaded
it was their duty, but had not courage or
zeal enough to put it in execution. There are
many sins, some very crying; profane and
scandalous Sabbath breaking, beastly drunken-
ness, desperate cursing and swearing, woeful
and miserable idleness: There are good and
wholsome Laws against those sins, let there
be such a check and restraint laid upon them,
that our streets may not be witness of them: If
these do prevail, God hath said that the Land shall
mourn for them: Great industry and zeal is
needful here when sin is grown impudent; the

exerting of it will be your honour, and by doing these things, you shall verifie the title God hath dignified you withal, that you are Shields of the Earth.

5. To the Reverend Elders, the Messengers of Christ, that you be faithful to God, to this People, and to your own Souls: in particular much to study and preach the sins of the times and places you live in. God hath placed us as Watch-men to descry danger, and give due warning of approaching evil. Let us be faithful in our places, vigilant in our work, much in contemplation, seeking to find out the mind of God, and not afraid with boldness to declare it though the times may seem hardly to resent us. We have an account to give for Souls, and God will demand of us what is become of those who were committed to our charge. Above all let us take care to do as we say, and be ensamples to the Flocks: It may be, by this means you that not only save your selves, but also those that hear you. Beware of being Idol-Shepherds; they are evil times we live in, men love to be let alone and encouraged in sin, but let us have no fellowship with their works of darknes, but rather reprove them. In all your dealings with men be plain and faithful: Some may for that say with *Abab*, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* But be not angry but compassionate, and mourn in secret for them. Let us study to be men of know-

knowledge, fixed in principles, holy in conversation, in a word, let us do all we can (more than we do) if it be possible, to save a Generation from the wrath of God, and impending Calamities : Let us be still more plain, more particular, more serious in this great work.

To hasten towards a Conclusion, I shall strike but one blow more on these nails, to fasten them, and so recommend all unto him who is the great Master of the Assemblies. It is an opinion which some seem strongly to be built upon, and it renders them strangely presumptuous, *viz.* That the foundations of this People are unmovable ; that our civil constitutions, and Church Covenants have so engaged the presence of God with us, that we ly out of the reach of forraign mischief. Thus the *Athenians* once chained down the Image of *Minerwa*, their Tutelary Goddess, to her station, and so thought they had secured themselves from all dangers of being subjugated by any enemy, or oppressed with any evil. And to think to oblige the true God with verbal Covenants, and formal profession, is no other than to make him an Idol : Yet thus the cry of many speaks in the language of those *Jews*, *Jer. 7. 4.* *The Temple of the Lord are these :* Forgetting how many wayes they have disobliged, and giving God just reason to be ashamed to own or acknowledge them. How fond such thoughts as these are, the ruinous heaps of many

renowned places, which once enjoyed as much of Gods presence with them as any in the World, do stand for monumental witnesses, The more of God hath sometimes been among you, the greater is your sin, and the speedier may be your Calamity, If growing weary of his Government you abuse all your liberties to desperate licentiousness. There is nothing so dear or precious unto God, or sticks so close and near unto him, but if it once comes to interfere with his Glory (which is his beloved end, and he will upon no pretence part withal) he can remove it far enough from him. See, *Jer. 22. 24, 25.* You have here the only remedy to recover a sick and dying People, ; this will, nothing else will affect it. True Repentance, and through Reformation never come in vain, though when Judgement was gathered into a thick Cloud and ready, yea, beginning to drop down in a storm of fury, but it hath blown it over. This God proffered *Judah* here when they were almost ripe for ruine ; and this God once again this day proffers to you. Oh, be not proud and stiff-necked ! be not obstinate and rebellious ! Why will you dye ? Obey the voice of the Lord, do what he bids, do what your Consciences say you ought to do, do what you have before God confessed your selves guilty for, because you have neglected to do it : Do what all reason and equity requires, and for the omission whereof you have

have no just ground or pretence; do this and live. *Be willing and obedient, and you shall eat the fruit of the Land.* Be grieved for Sin and Apostacy, and it will grieve God to put you to grief. But if all that is said from time to time, be disregarded; if these counsels prove as water spilt upon a rock; and though you can lend an ear to hear these words with patience, yet will not do them, but can slightly cast them out of your minds, and throw them behind your backs; they will stand on record against you, and become a farther aggravation of your guilt: And in that day when all those things shall come to pass, of which you have been so frequently and solemnly warned, and the Lord shall suffer none of the the words of his Servants to fall to the ground. Then shall you know there have been Prophets among you.

F I N I S.

[illegible]

21413



All Plots against God and his People
Detected and Defeated, as it was
delivered in a

S E R M O N

At a FAST kept by the first gathered
Church in BOSTON, Jan. 25.

1682.

Prov. 21. 30

*There is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Coun-
sel against the Lord.*

THe vulgar Plea, that Proverbs are In-
dependent Sentences, usually so pla-
ced as to stand intirely by them-
selves without any co-herence with
the Context, may suffice me from looking beyond
the Text it self for an *Analysis*. The nature of
Proverbs being a contraction of large a weigh-
ty

ty truths into a little room, and binding them up as so many portable Jewels, for the better accommodation of the Christian Pilgrim in his Journey, challengeth our more diligent attention to them. The words before us are a choise *Elixir*, or precious Cordial, extracted on purpose to comfort the hearts of the People of God, and keep them from fainting, when they see all the wit in the World, and the deepest polititions of earth and hell gathered into a combination against them.

In the Words are two things observable :

I. A presumption or supposition of a deep and desperate conspiracy, in which we may consider.

I. The Conspirators, who are not plainly named, but are tacitly Characterized, and we are to suppose them to be the deepest heads and profoundest Counsellors in the World: Men of *Wisdom, Understand and Counsel*. Devils also may, without force to the *Text* be comprehended under them, those perspicacious spirits, who are of a vast intelligence and long experience.

II. The quality of the Conspiracy, intimated to be made with the maturest deliberation which the farthest reach of the most politick created understanding could attain unto. Whither so many several things be aimed at in the divers expressions of our *Text*, as by wisdom, a natural callidity

callidity, and excellent ability to contrive means most suitable to the fairest attainment of our end; by understanding, an experimental knowledge gathered by Observation and History, built upon, and further accomplishing of that natural sagacity; and by counsel an improving of both the former by deepest study and consultation, contriving how they may with best security of the success accommodate means to their design: or whither by the accumulation of so many words be only intended to set forth the height of mens wit and industry in this plot, is not much material: either way, we are to suppose these Conspirators to have done their best, and made the conjuration as strong and secure as their combined wits can possibly devise.

3. The Object against whom this conspiracy is made, *against the Lord*. The word translated *against* sometimes signifies before, or in the presence, and so one Translatour renders it, *q. d.* Man's counsel is vain, or to no purpose, whiles God looks on, or because God seeth it. But the word is also frequently used adverbatively, to signify *against*, and so the generality of Translators and interpreters do here carry it. And it is the Lord [Jehovah] against whom men are thus supposed to take counsel: and here we are not only to look upon such as included within the plot, and here intended, who by open and professed hostility do take up Arms directly against

against God, saying with proud *Pharaoh*, in daring defiance, *who is the Lord that I should let Israel go?* but it also extends unto all those who do collaterally oppose themselves against him, and such are all they who do.

1. Seek to overthrow his purposes, & decrees, and by their own counsels to disannul his, hoping to establish them, notwithstanding he hath otherwise determined. Thus did *Joseph's* brethren seek all courses to frustrate the counsel of God which he had signified, about the advancement of their brother.

2. Labour to nullifie his promises, and make his word, by which he hath engaged himself to his People, to fall to the ground, seeking to throw blocks in the way of his providence, which may give check to his progress to performance: Thus *Saul* sought by all means to hinder *David* from receiving the promised Crown.

3. Contrive how they may subvert, and root the true Religion out of the World, by destroying the sincere fearers of God, and suppressing the true profession of his Name: As *Sanballat* & *Tobijah* did against the *Jews*, when they were weak and feeble.

2. We have the disappointing, defeating, and total routing of this treacherous plot, intimated in that expression, *there is none*: Which negative particle is three times inculcated in the Original

Text

Text ; insinuating that it is a truth, not dark and dubious, but notorious.

We are not to interpret the wise man as if he intended to assert that there were no such designs at all, as though he denied the being of such a thing, that cannot be his meaning, the Scripture often asserts the quite contrary, and the Records of the Church tell us, and experience hath proved it too true, that in all ages, there have been such conclaves as these, bandying against the Lord and his anointed. His true intention therefore is, that all such undertakings are wholly successles ; that they study and plot in vain and to no purpose ; that they are so frustrated and disappointed that they become as if they had never been. . God enjoys himself in as much peace and tranquillity, and is as far from being engaged by them, as if there had been none at all. They do not so much as disturb him.

Hence,

Doct. The strongest Conspiracies, and most subtle combinations against Gods purposes, promises and People, shall be altogether ineffectual.

Let the wisest men upon earth, and the most knowing Devils in hell, proceed with the most mature deliberation, lay all their heads together, take never so much time to consult, find out the
most

most probable wayes to effect, and never so curiously contrive to obviate all possible accidents which might otherwise defeat their purposes, and provide the greatest strength of a created arm to put in execution, what they have so plotted against God : Yet all this contrivance and cost shall be to no purpose, these counsels shall be overwhelmed, and resolutions brought to nothing. The Scripture is so full for this both with Testimonies and Examples, that it would be endless to essay the producings of all that is there recorded for the evidence of it. See how the Psalmist expresses it, *Psal. 2. begin.* Where he brings in the enemies sitting at the Council-Table, beating their brains, and contriving how they may prevent God in his designs. And God in the mean while deriding and scoffing at all their enterprizes, and in despite of them still giving being to his decrees, and accomplishing his word : So true is that of the wise-man, *Prov. 19. 21. There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless the Counsel of the Lord that shall stand.* We may take up the explication of the Doctrine in these following propositions.

Pro. 1. That there alwayes have been, and still are those in the World, who are designedly set against the Lord. There are such desperate and fool-hardy ones, that bend all their wits and power against the God of heaven. And if any should enquire, who these *Nimrods* be? Or where

Where these Gyants dwell? I answer in general, every wicked man is he that so doth: It is part of his description given, *Job 15. 25, 26. He stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty, &c.* But in a more especial manner, all those that set themselves against God's People to oppress, persecute, and as far as in them lies to root them out, are herein accounted by the word of truth, to stand against God. So the Psalmist, *Psal. 83. 3. with 4. They have taken crafty counsel against thy People: — They are confederate against thee.* They may possibly in words confess God and Christ; yea, and be so foolish as to think they do God the best service, when they do the most against his servants: But still God takes them for his enemies; and when was the World without such ones, Cain's time?

Pro. 2. That the Ring-leaders and principal Agents among God's enemies, are men of the greatest natural wit and understanding: So that if events were to be judged of according to the quality of instruments they would be thought most likely to speed. If there be a plot laid against Gods *Davids*, you shall hear that the Worlds *Achitophels* (those Oracles of Policy) are in it. The Devil, if at any time he finds any that are singularly witty, useth with most endeavours to make them notoriously wicked, and seeks to fill their hearts with deepest prejudices

judices against the wayes and People of God; He useth more than ordinary care, to make such men his own. That observation of our Saviours is too observable to be questioned, *Luk. 26. 8.* *The Children of this World are in their generation wiser than the Children of light.* The Apostle, when he would Characterize those that stand on Gods side, and those that take part with his enemies, puts the greatest number of the wise and prudent of the World on the adverse part, and finds a very few standing on God's side, *1 Cor. 1. 26.* *Not many wise.*

Pro. 3. That the enemies of God and his People do make it their business, to consult and contrive, how they may manage their cause to the best advantage against them. It is a plot which is ever on foot, and unto which contribution is continually made: For this they ride and run, and communicate their counsels: Such is their wrath and malice that they cannot ly still: This is the very piece they have on the Anvil, and upon which they are alwayes beating: It is the Master-plot in the World, *David* describes their sedulity in this business, *Psal. 64. 5, 6.* *They commune of laying snares privily, they search out iniquitie, they accomplish a diligent search.* They strein their inventions, turn every stone, dig deep to lay their counsels secret, and bring about their purposes unexpectedly: Hence, they are said to go in travail with them, *Psal.*

7. 14. *He travaileth with iniquity.*

Pro. 4. That this conspiracy hath a great many friends, favourers, and confederates. It hath the greatest strength of men on its side, and is daily growing and encreasing, *Psal. 3. 1. How are they encreased that trouble me?* It may be said of this, as of that of *Absalom*, *2 Sam. 15. 12. The conspiracy was strong, for the People encreased continually with Absalom.* The great men of the World are wont for the most part to engage in it, *Psal. 2. 2. The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the Rulers take counsel together.* And the little ones are apt in greatest number to follow their leaders, especially in that which is evil, to which they are drawn by a natural propensity: yea, this malignity spreads so far as to draw many People, and joyn hearts and counsels and confederacies in it. *Psal. 83. 5, to 8. The Tabernacle of Edom, &c.* The army of the Saints are but a little flock, their enemies fill the country: What these politick heads contrive, they have a multitude of hands ready prest to put in execution.

Pro. 5. The enemies of God are very presumptuous, and full of confidence that the day shall be their own; they make no doubt of bringing about their devices against God and his Church. Such is their bold confidence that they can even make a triumph before the Victory, and look upon the opposite cause as gone before ever

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they strike a stroke, *Psal.* 10. 6-11. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; God hath forgotten. And 64. 4. They encourage themselves in all evil matter, 71. 11. saying, God hath forsaken him: Persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him. See with what a confident boasting *Senacherib* sends his defiance against God, *Isa.* 37. 10, &c. And *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 5. 2. As if Heaven were not able to confront them: They say that Wisdom, and Counsel, and Strength are all on their side, and who then shall think to defeat them of success? Thus they boast before they put off the Harness.

2. *Pro.* 6. God many times suffers his enemies to be seemingly prosperous and successful in their undertakings against him. Infinite Wisdom hath holy ends, for which it often permits wicked men to proceed a great way against his Cause and People. The Church is oftentimes brought very low, whiles God seems to stand by and not regard, so that his People are ready to think that Providence sleeps; and God appears as if he had withdrawn and estranged himself from his own interest.

Hence, The Psalmist's sorrowful complaint and earnest Prayer, *Psal.* 44. 17. to the end.

Hence, The Prophets earnest expostulation, *Jer.* 14. 8, 9. The enemy hath sometimes an apprehended

ded advantage to ask them, where is their God, *Psal.* 42. 3. There may be great outward Calamities upon those that are called by God's Name, as we may see by that doleful complaint made *Psal.* 77. 7. &c. And the ends which God propounds in his so doing, are.

1. That he may humble and reform his own People: Hence the Churches enemies are called his Rod, *Isa.* 10. 5. Corruptions and depravations do sometimes grow insensibly upon the Church and People of God, especially in times of peace and tranquillity; God by thus doing cleanseth them of their pollutions. Persecution, and oppression, and a yoke of bondage, is a fire in which their dross and filth is melted out, and taken away, *Isa.* 27. 9. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged away, &c.*

2. That by the Saints perseverance under affliction he may be glorified. God is greatly honoured by the patience and constancy of his Children under the opposition and oppression of their adversaries. As he puts an honour upon them, when he counts them worthy to suffer for his name, so the Apostles reckoned it, *Act.* 5. 41. So is he also honoured by them, when they with an holy resolution, suffer quietly and cheerfully in defence of the truth, and for the sincere profession of the Gospel, *2 Thes.* 1. 4. 5.

3. That he may gain the more glorious triumph over the enemies of his Name and Glory. Hereby God honoured himself upon *Pharaoh*, by letting him proceed to the height of his rage, before he crusheth him. God will have a wicked world to know how easie a thing it is with him to curb them in, and give check to their rage and fury; and to the discovering of this, he will permit them to arrive at the height and utmost pitch of their hoped advantage, and suffer his own cause hereupon to be most deeply hazarded, that so he may give them the more notable defeat, and make them to know that he is above them in all those things wherein they have dealt most proudly. Hence *Jethro's* confession, *Exod. 18. 11.* *Now I know the Lord is greater than all Gods, &c.*

Pro. 7. By all their plots and practices against Gods cause wicked men cannot carry their design one hairs breadth beyond the bounds which God hath set them in his Decree. Might we be admitted to look upon those ancient Records, and then compare the doings of the enemies against God, we should find them exactly to agree: Men are in the Scripture compared to many and great waters, and their tumults compared to the roaring waves of the Sea dashing against the Rocks: These waters many times swell into billows, and break with impetuous fury, as if they scorned to be comprehended and bounded

bounded within the sandy bars which are laid for them; but, as Gods decree hath laid out their limits, and fixt their bounds, so his providence tyes them up powerfully, that for all their noise and rage they cannot get a step further, *Job. 38. 8, to 11. Psal. 65. 7. Which stilleth the noise of the Seas, the noise of their waves, also the tumults of the People.* When wicked men think they have done never so much, they have but fulfilled God's counsel, and not their own, *Psal. 76. 10. The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* God's hand holds the Flood-gates, and as the waters ly still till he pulls them up, so when he hath let out so much as serves his turn, he shuts them down again in a moment, and not a drop gets out but at his appointment. If men purpose contrary to what God hath purposed, theirs must fall, for his shall stand; and whiles they seek to defeat, they shall in that very thing be the instruments of bringing it about; as we see in *Joseph's* brethren, who in what they supposed had made his dreams abortive, helped forward their accomplishment.

Pro. 8. All the power and policy of the world cannot frustrate, no not so much as defer the fulfilling of one of God's promises. God had promised *Abraham* that after four hundred and thirty years, his posterity should be delivered from the bondage of *Egypt*; and we read how wisely *Pha-*

raab and his Servants dealt to put by this promise, and make it miscarry : Yet see how God brings it about, *Exod. 12. 41, 42.* At the end of four hundred and thirty years, the self same day it came to pass, &c. It is a night to be much observed, &c. Men keep their purposes very secret, lest by coming abroad, they should be countermined, they dig under ground, lest being discovered, they should be disappointed : But God passeth his purposes into promises, and makes them legible, and will all engageth his word to perform them in the very time, *Heb. 2. 2, 3.* Write the vision, and make it plain, &c. because it will surely come, it will not tarry. God had appointed *David* to be King over his People *Israel* ; and how did *Saul* labour to take away his life, and so to prevent his succession ? but all his counsels come to nought, and *David* reigns. Thick and heavy Clouds may gather, and threaten a dismal storm, but if God have said it shall not come, he raiseth a contrary wind and blows them all away. *Senacherib* threatens to invade *Judah* with a formidable army, but God promiseth he will send a blast upon him, which shall turn him back, *Isa. 37. 6, 7.* And that he shall not so much as shoot an Arrow against the City, *vers. 33, 34.* And he presently dispatcheth an Angel to do his business effectually for him, which soon deverts his thoughts and sends him home there to find his ruine, *vers. 36, 37.* There are none
that

that can ever be able to alter the word which is gone out of his mouth.

Pro. 9. God will have a Church in the world as long as the world lasts, in despite of all the counsels of Men and Devils. They, because they cannot reach the glorious Majesty immediately, turn all their rage and malice into persecution of the Saints of the most high: But all are vain attempts: This is the house which is built upon the rock, wind, rain, and floods can never disettle it; this is the City which hath foundations, the Mount Zion which God loveth, and will establish for ever: To this Christ hath made that promise, *that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, Mat. 16. 18.* Hells Flood-gates are set wide open, the Heathen rage, and Kingdoms are moved, but the Church is secured, and *David* gives the reason of it, *Psal. 46. 5. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.* Enemies indeed have sometime supposed they had the Churches neck on the block, and thought to behead it at one blow, but then their hands have failed them strangely, *Exod. 15. 9. 10. The enemy said I will pursue, &c. thou didst blow with thy wind, the Seas covered them.*

Pro. 10. God hath many wonderful and glorious wayes to rinate all the counsels that are laid against him. The time would fail to instance in particular what hath been observed on this account. Let it suffice to propose some general Conclusions.

I. God

3. That he may gain the more glorious triumph over the enemies of his Name and Glory. Hereby God honoured himself upon *Pharaoh*, by letting him proceed to the height of his rage, before he crusheth him. God will have a wicked world to know how easie a thing it is with him to curb them in, and give check to their rage and fury; and to the discovering of this, he will permit them to arrive at the height and utmost pitch of their hoped advantage, and suffer his own cause hereupon to be most deeply hazarded, that so he may give them the more notable defeat, and make them to know that he is above them in all those things wherein they have dealt most proudly. Hence *Jeſebro's* confession, *Exod. 18. 11.* Now I know the Lord is greater than all Gods, &c.

Pro. 7. By all their plots and practices against Gods cause wicked men cannot carry their design one hairs breadth beyond the bounds which God hath set them in his Decree. Might we be admitted to look upon those ancient Records, and then compare the doings of the enemies against God, we should find them exactly to agree: Men are in the Scripture compared to many and great waters, and their tumults compared to the roaring waves of the Sea dashing against the Rocks: These waters many times swell into billows, and break with impetuous fury, as if they scorned to be comprehended and bounded

bounded within the sandy bars which are laid for them; but, as Gods decree hath laid out their limits, and fixt their bounds, so his providence tyes them up powerfully, that for all their noise and rage they cannot get a step further, *Job. 38. 8, to 11. Psal. 65. 7. Which stilleth the noise of the Seas, the noise of their waves, also the tumults of the People.* When wicked men think they have done never so much, they have but fulfilled God's counsel, and not their own, *Psal. 76. 10. The wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* God's hand holds the Flood-gates, and as the waters ly still till he pulls them up, so when he hath let out so much as serves his turn, he shuts them down again in a moment, and not a drop gets out but at his appointment. If men purpose contrary to what God hath purposed, theirs must fall, for his shall stand; and whiles they seek to defeat, they shall in that very thing be the instruments of bringing it about; as we see in *Joseph's* brethren, who in what they supposed had made his dreams abortive, helped forward their accomplishment.

Pro. 8. All the power and policy of the world cannot frustrate, no nor so much as defer the fulfilling of one of God's promises. God had promised *Abraham* that after four hundred and thirty years, his posterity should be delivered from the bondage of *Egypt*; and we read how wisely *Pha-*

raah and his Servants dealt to put by this promise, and make it miscarry : Yet see how God brings it about, *Exod. 12. 41, 42.* *At the end of four hundred and thirty years, the self same day it came to pass.* &c. *It is a night to be much observed,* &c. Men keep their purposes very secret, lest by coming abroad, they should be countermined, they dig under ground, lest being discovered, they should be disappointed : But God passeth his purposes into promises, and makes them legible, and withall engageth his word to perform them in the very time, *Heb. 2. 2, 3.* *Write the vision, and make it plain,* &c. *because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* God had appointed David to be King over his People Israel ; and how did Saul labour to take away his life, and so to prevent his succession ? but all his counsels come to nought, and David reigns. Thick and heavy Clouds may gather, and threaten a dismal storm, but if God have said it shall not come, he raiseth a contrary wind and blows them all away. *Senacherib* threatens to invade *Judah* with a formidable army, but God promiseth he will send a blast upon him, which shall turn him back, *Isa. 37. 6, 7.* And that he shall not so much as shoot an Arrow against the City, *vers. 33, 34.* And he presently dispatcheth an Angel to do his business effectually for him, which soon deverts his thoughts and sends him home there to find his ruine, *vers. 36, 37.* There are none
that

that can ever be able to alter the word which is gone out of his mouth.

Pro. 9. God will have a Church in the world as long as the world lasts, in despite of all the counsels of Men and Devils. They, because they cannot reach the glorious Majesty immediately, turn all their rage and malice into persecution of the Saints of the most high: But all are vain attempts: This is the house which is built upon the rock, wind, rain, and floods can never disettle it; this is the City which hath foundations, the Mount Zion which God loveth, and will establish for ever: To this Christ hath made that promise, *that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it, Mat. 16. 18.* Hells Flood-gates are set wide open, the Heathen rage, and Kingdoms are moved, but the Church is secured, and *David* gives the reason of it, *Psal. 46. 5. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.* Enemies indeed have sometime supposed they had the Churches neck on the block, and thought to behead it at one blow, but then their hands have failed them strangely, *Exod. 15. 9, 10. The enemy said I will pursue, &c. thou didst blow with thy wind, the Seas covered them.*

Pro. 10. God hath many wonderful and glorious wayes to ruinate all the counsels that are laid against him. The time would fail to instance in particular what hath been observed on this account. Let it suffice to propose some general Conclusions.

I. God

1. God seeth and observeth all the plottings and consultings which are used against him. Men think they act very secretly, and suppose they shall hide their counsel not from man only, but from God too, *Psal. 64. 5. They say, who shall see them? 94. 7. They say, the Lord shall not see.* But alas, those Omniscient eyes of God, which are as flames of fire, are no wayes obscured by the thickest darkness, *Psal. 139. 12. The darkness hideth not from thee.* There is no cover or vault to be found which is out of the continual view of his eye.

Hence,

That *Isa. 29. 15. Wo to them that seek to hide their counsel from the Lord.* God hears every word, takes notice of every counsel. All stands in the light of his countenance, so that he cannot be surprized, or set upon at unawares, and so taken unprovided.

2. Divine wisdom is able with greatest ease to confound all the wisdom and policy of men, the Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. 1. 25. That the foolishness of God is wiser than men. i. e.* Those things which men repute foolish and injudicious. The little wit of the ablest men cannot ty a knot so curiously, but infinite wisdom can untie it again. He can befool men in their profoundest counsel, baffle them in their Master-plots, *Isa. 44. 25. That turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.* There shall not be a more ready,

y, and rational way to their utter confusion,
 than that which they have contrived for their
 prosperity, *Psal. 64. 8.* He can divide them in
 their counsels; this *David* prays for, *Psal. 55.*
9. Divide their tongues. They shall fall out and
 impede one another from acting any thing, thus
 God saved the life of *Paul*, by dividing the minds
 of the company, *Act. 23. 6, 7.* He can make
 such fools of men that they shall deliberately re-
 spect the good counsel of *Achitophel*, and prefer
 the foolish and destructive counsel of *Hushai*, and
 with a full cry declare that it is best at this time,
2 Sam. 15. 14. He can put a blind before mens
 eyes, and lead them into miserable undoing mis-
 execution of their counsels: Thus
 are the *Amorites* led into the midst of *Samaria* at
 unawares, who went to surprize the Prophet at
Dotban. 2 King. 6. 19. He can make those
 purposes which were intended stiffly to have
 stemmed the stream, to run down in the Chan-
 nel of his decrees, and liberally to contribute to-
 wards the furtherance of them, *Isa. 10. 6, 7.*

3, God's Almighty Power is able to break in
 pieces and forcibly to bear down all the purposes
 and plots that are against him. God hath a
 mighty arm, and can by plain force in the open
 field make a conquest, upon, and lead in Tri-
 umph all those that rise up against him.. His
 Sword can cut their Gordian knots in pieces, and
 put them from all their guards; he can trouble
 the

the hosts of the *Egyptians*, and knock off their Chariot wheels : He can shut up the womb of carnal counsels, and make them go in travel with them all their dayes, and never bring forth, *Psal. 21. 11. They imagine a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.* He can make all their designs miscarry, *Psal. 7. 14. He hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.* Nay, it is with him to make their own contrivances the means of their own destruction, *vers. 15. He hath made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he hath made.* *Haman* shall build a gallows to hang himself upon. If he please they shall turn their sword [REDACTED] themselves, and sheath them in each other's sword, so shall the earth help the Woman. He can when he will shrink up *Jeroboam's* arme, when stretcht forth against his Prophet : If he think meet he can dispirit the whole World, and make their hearts utterly to fail them ; he can put them into an amazing fright where there is no cause at all of fear : A rumour shall bring *Senacribs* great and victorious army to an Alt, and send them home again faster than they came : A noise of Chariots and Horse-men shall break up the *Syrians* Camp, and put them to the run : And there are many such things as these with him.

4 God is able to engage all the Creation at his pleasure to take his part, and to make them
succes

successful against his enemies. These are his reserves, of whom though he hath no need, being every way furnished in himself for his own security, and his adversaries confusion, yet if his wisdom see meet, he can improve them, and so improve them, that there are not the most contemptible among them, but, if armed and employed by him, shall accomplish the business. The holy Angels are his Pretorian Band, prest, sworn and faithful to his command; one of these can rout and ruine an Army of *Assyrians*, and in a night cut off an hundred eighty and five thousand mighty men, *2 King. 19. 35.* Men, whose hearts are naturally rebellious, and who are engaged in a quarrel against him, are yet under his powerful management, and he can turn them to his own purposes, *Prov. 21. 1.* Stars, rivers, fire, and hail, all these fulfil his word: Insects, as Locusts, Caterpillars and Palm-worms, are his formidable host, and, coming on his errand, shall do things dreadful and amazing, *Joel 2. 2.* &c. And, when we have laid all these things together, now say, is there, can there be wisdom, understanding or counsel against the Lord?

USE, I. For information in a few conclusions that follow from hence.

1. This shews us what great fools the Worlds wise-men and great politicians are; and what objects they be of laughter and scorn; They take them-

themselves indeed for the only wise men, and all others are in their account but a company of silly things; but can there be supposed a greater piece of rank folly in men, than to undertake, and engage in an enterprize, which not only they shall never accomplish, but contrarily will of certainty be their ruine? They are laying their heads together, and taking counsel as one against that God that will be above them in despite of all their endeavours: They are gnawing at a bone that will certainly break out all their teeth; they are lifting at a stone that will undoubtedly fall upon them and crush them to pieces, *Zech. 12. 3. I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone to all People; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the People of the earth be gathered together against it.* If men would study the readiest, and nearest way to their own destruction, they can never find out one more certain and dreadful, than to set their wits, and engage their time and power against God in his Church and People. How ridiculous then must they needs be? Well may God be brought in as laughing at, and deriding of them, *Psal. 2. 4.* How can God look upon them any otherwise than in an holy scorn, to see a company of Pigmies come armed with pride and confidence, presuming to obtain a victory over the great God? To see a few light Atoms of dust, promising themselves to turn the scale of

Divine

Divine Providence with their Iudibrious weight? Oh! with what sedatnefs doth God sit, and with how much holy contempt doth he behold an Army of Pismires and Moles, trying to undermine the brazen walls of his providence, and blow up that rock on which his Church is built? and with how much satisfaction and pleasure doth he sit, and see them digging their own graves, and shooting up of those Arrows against Heaven, which in the fall shall light upon their own heads, and become their ruine?

2. That it is the duty of the People & Church of God to see and adore him in all that which they suffer in this world. This truth, well thought of, would be of special use to quiet our tumultuous thoughts in evil times. We are ready to think this comes from men, from enemies; and our hearts are apt to rise against them, and against God too that he helps us not: Whereas this should stop our thoughts, and silence our murmurings, to consider that men are but instruments, they can do nothing against God; this evil therefore is from him, *Amos 3. 5. Shall there be evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it?* There is a vastly different effect upon the hearts of men: Between looking upon instruments, and no further, and looking upon them as instruments, eying withal the hand that manageth them. *Abishai* looks no further than *Schimes*, and is in a rage, *Shal this dead dog curse my Lord*

Lord the King? David sees God sending Shimei, and saith, Let him alone, God hath bidden him; it may be the Lord will look upon my afflictions, &c. According as the principal efficient is Judged of, accordingly we shall enquire into the causes of our sufferings: If we think Men or Devils to be so, we shall then take it to be their rage and malice, and if we rest here, this will stir up our anger, and so put us exceedingly out of frame: But if we discern it to be of God, we shall then discern his holy displeasure, enkindled by sin, which will tend to humble us, and drive us to Repentance. Whenever therefore we see the Ax cutting, and feel the Rod smarting, let us say, this could not be without an hand to wield them: When the wicked persecute the Righteous, say this is the Lord, who is holy in all his wayes, and just in all his works.

3. Learn hence that the only reason of the Churches safety is because their cause is twisted in with Gods; And hence that their only security is in being and standing for God and his interest. Could we look upon the people of God separate and by themselves, it would readily appear what odds the wicked would have of them; there are the politick states men, the ripe wits, and profound heads, men of greatest skill and political observations; there are the mighty men, men of renown, skilful in War, and valiant for the battle: There are the walled Towns with

Gates

Gates of Brass, the high Towers, and fortified Castles, and invincible Armadoes ; they have the men, and the mony, and ammunition : and what can carnal reason Judge from all this, but that theirs must be the day too ? And if their wit and power had no other Antagonist to encounter withal, but those of the Saints, it would certainly be so ; but here lyes their security, whatsoever is undertaken against the Saints of God, is undertaken against God himself : they that strike at the People of God, strike at God in them, and so they that touch them, touch the Apple of his eye, *Zech. 2. 8.* Christ interprets both kindneses and injuries done to his, as done to himself. Gods own Name, Honour, and Glory are herein sought to be undermined, and that rouseth him up, kindleth his jealousy ; and those who but now were such odds to the People of God, find God to be much more their odds. And are made but as flax and stubble to a devouring fire. It is well for the poor Church that God takes himself to be concerned in their cause ; and, for the vindication of his own name, and injuries done to himself, puts in, and takes up the Gantler against his proud enemies, and tryes for mastroies with them ; else had that little Barge, the Church of Christ, long ago sunk and been swallowed up in the billows of the worlds Sea, *Psal. 124.* begin.

USE, II. This truth may, by way of Exhortation

tion, present some wholsome practical lesson for the People of God to make use of in these times. There never was more plotting and counsel against God, than is at this day in the World.

And hence,

Never more need of Faith for the upholding of the spirits of the People of God, against the thence arising Temptations; and no better help than the Doctrine that is before us: And the things we are hence to learn are,

1. Not to be much moved when we see or hear what is contriving & practicing against God in the World. It is said, *Isa. 7. 2. It was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim, and his heart was moved, and the heart of his People, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* Let it not be so with them that fear God. It is now a time to pray hard and believe much, but it is no time to perplex and distract our selves. We may interpret those words as spoken to the Church in way of encouragement, *Psal. 64. 10. Be still, and know that I am God.* What are you afraid of? It is against God all that is undertaken; and whoever resisted him and prospered? do you think that Men or Devils shall ever drive God out of the field, and make a triumph upon the Lord of Hosts? Be quiet, let God alone, he will do his own work, and that to purpose; Tarry a little and

and you shall see these Brave's weltering in their own gore, and the arrows of the Almighty drunk with their blood. It shall not be long ere the field be cleared, and not an enemy standing. *Tet a little while and the wicked shall be no more, Psal. 37. 10.*

2. Not to be put by our profession and faithful service of God by all the menaces of the World against us. Let Godly men hold on their way, though the wicked be laying snares in it. It is a sin, and a disgrace for a Child of God to stand still, or start aside, though utmost perils seem to threaten him. *Luther* being called to *Worms*, for the defence of the truth, was disswaded by some friends, who advised him that there was a plot laid against his life: but with an Heroical resolution he professed, that though all the Tiles of their houses were Devils, yet go he would. Rightly regulated and well tempered zeal is very necessary in times when Religion is stricken at on all sides. 'Tis the Character and honour of a good Christian to hold fast his own, and press forward against opposition; yea, by an holy Antiperistasis, to gather strength and courage from that which is intended to make him faint, *Job 17. 9. The Righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*

3. Not to be discouraged though for a while the wicked's counsels seem to take place.

It is the Psalmists advice, *Psal. 37. 7. Fret not thy self because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.* When you hear how Gods cause is the present suffering cause, and seems to go down the wind; so many Churches of Protestants dissipated in *Hungary*, so many thousands abjuring their Religion in *France*: So much bloodshed in one place, so much power of the adversary in another, be not now dispirited: The Seas roar, and the waves thereof make a tumultuous noise, mountains come rolling down into the midst of the Seas; still there is a River to make glad the City of God: God sits upon the water-floods, God sits King for ever. Gods Glory is concerned in all this, and he will not give it away: God is not asleep, though you are ready to think him so: He hath holy ends why he suffers all this, and will make a discovery of them seasonably: The pit is all this while digging for them, the sword is whetting, the arrows are preparing for the Persecutours; the Scene shall be turned, and a tragical end waits upon them: For, *though hand joyn in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished.*

4. Wait with patience and holy confidence under the outmost extremities, till Gods time comes to blast all the counsels of his adversaries, and utterly dissolve hells conclave. Though God be not come as yet visibly, yet believe that he will

will come seasonably, and there are these two things that may fortifie your confidence in this belief, viz.

1. That all their Counsels as yet have not prevailed, and the reason only is taken from God's Power and Providence. It is said that *Rome and Hell* have carried on a plot, ever since the Reformation in *England*, to blow up the Protestant interest there; and this is a ground of comfort, that although God hath not as yet (for holy ends) wholly scattered it, yet he hath wonderfully disappointed it. That Vessel, the Church, hath had many a blustering storm raised against it, but it is not as yet foundred at all, but weathers it out against Tempests, ; and this is certain, that he who hath delivered, can deliver, and will deliver.

2. That God's counsel stands Diametrically opposite to the counsel of wicked men: i. e. as to the order and design they are carrying one. They consult his dishonour and his Churches disturbance: He is mean while consulting his own Glory, and his Peoples safety: Let God then alone to dash theirs, and establish his own, hear what he saith for this, *I sa. 14. 24, 25, 26, 27. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, &c. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole Earth, &c. The Lord of hosts hath purposed and who shall disannul it*

Men say it shall be thus, but God saith it shall be so, whose word shall stand, theirs or his? When you read bloody decrees, the product of humane consultations, then read the book of God, & oppose to them the gracious decrees of Heaven. It was *Luther's* consolation to the *Elector of Saxony*, in a time of great danger; *Let your Highness know (saith he) and nothing doubt, but that this business is otherwise concluded of in Heaven, than it is at Norinberge*: Where the Emperour and States were met in Counsel, God knows what his own thoughts are towards his People, even thoughts of peace, whatever the thoughts of men may be, *Jer 29. 10.* Wait then, the wickeds day is a coming; in due time their foot shall slide: The Web which they have been for a long while in weaving, God will unravel in a moment: He will shortly muster up his Forces and draw out his Armies into the Field, and call together the Fowls of Heaven to his great Supper which he shall provide for them, where he wil give them to eat of *the flesh of Kings, and the flesh of Captains, and the flesh of mighty Men, &c.* *Rev. 19. 17. 18.* This is the work which he hath undertaken to do, and will certainly accomplish it throughly, who hath written on his Vesture, and on his Thigh, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.** And since the case stands thus, what is there then remaining more for us to do, but to

be the Lord's Remembrancers. Not ceasing day nor night to be earnestly and importunately putting him in mind of his Covenant, his Name, and Glory? and in Faith pray to him in the behalf of his poor, despised, and abused Church, which is as a Lilly among the Thornies, that he would remember and not forget, or grow unmindful of the Congregation which he hath purchased of old, and arise to save those that are as sheep prepared to the slaughter, and appointed to dy: And when we have thus done, and in a way of so doing, there is nothing more but to sit still and wait to see the Salvation of the Lord,



F I N I S.

